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HIS SWEETHEART



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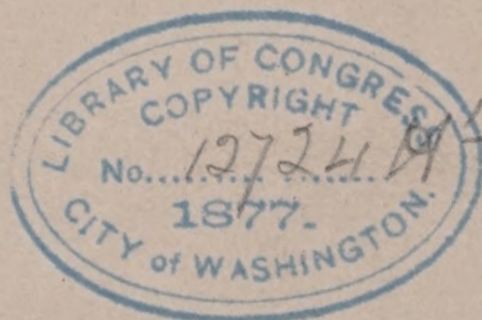
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

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Mackenzie, Mrs Robert S.

HIS
SWEETHEART.

✓
BY IGNOTA. *[pseud.]*

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JAMES A. MOORE,
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HIS SWEETHEART.

CHAPTER I.

MR. RAYMOND'S RESOLVE.

Mr. Raymond was a widower. To have lost the beloved partner of one's life is a sad affliction; doubly so, however, if the bereaved one is decidedly expected, by six children and several more distant relations, not to enter Hymen's temple a second time, but, henceforth, to enjoy a life of single blessedness, relying upon the comfort derived from a married daughter, who lives with her husband, miles off, and an imperious daughter-in-law, dwelling in the adjoining house.

Mr. Raymond had been thus pleasantly situated for two years, and, although not a meek man, by

any means, had received gratefully, and to all appearances, meekly, the loud attempts of Mrs. Raymond Junior, at making her father-in-law's home, to him, a paradise on earth.

Dashing with praiseworthy vigor into the nursery, and interrupting the fun of the youngest children, in the most unexpected manner, by lecturing them soundly, and reproving them eloquently, upon their outrageous behavior; hurrying thence into the kitchen, surprising the servants, and lifting lids and covers from dishes and kettles in quick survey; and proceeding, full of benevolent intentions, to Mr. Raymond's own sanctum, disturbing him in his profound thoughts and meditations; such was her way.

Two years ago Mrs. Raymond had died, leaving her husband a widower of forty-six years of age. Their eldest son, William, had married several years previous to this sad event, and had done exceedingly well for himself, taking for his wife an only child and a great heiress. His parents quite approved of his choice; his father had given him a handsome house, for, being a wealthy merchant, he could well afford it.

Their second eldest child, Maud, had also been

married, and every one interested in the matter had blessed her, and wished that the remaining children might get settled equally advantageously. Maud had gone with her husband to his superb home, proving herself, in the course of time, an excellent mistress to his establishment. The death of her mother followed soon after.

Maurice, the next eldest, was twenty, and to him the whole family looked up with great expectations. All the other children were plain, decidedly so, taking after their mother, but this one was his father, "out-and-out," as one is wont to say. He was handsome and intelligent; proud, yet very lovable; gentle in manner, yet firm and decided in action; the darling of all, and his father's pride. William and he had been taken into partnership by their father, a year previous to the eldest son's marriage.

Once a week Maud drove down from Bloomfield, to visit the home of her childhood, to attend to her father's welfare, never omitting, at leave-taking, to express her regrets that she was not able to do as "Barbara Marjoribank," stay at home, and be a comfort to Papa; after which she kissed her dear parent

affectionately, and entered her equipage with the delightful sensation of having done her duty.

After one of these weekly visits, Mr. Raymond, still an extremely well-looking man—his appearance not indicating his years, with his full dark hair only showing a silvery thread here and there, his well preserved complexion, his flashing eyes, his slight, erect figure, and aristocratic manners—retired to his own room. His countenance wore an uncommonly cloudy, even gloomy, aspect. Thoughts of a very unpleasant kind filled his mind, and his eyes followed abstractedly the clouds of smoke, as they rose curling toward the ceiling, after he had seated himself comfortably in an easy chair.

"I will do it!" broke at last from his lips, and a determined stamp of his foot showed that he was in earnest. "They try to do their best," he said, resuming his soliloquy. "But what is their best? discomfort and disorder everywhere. Two years I have born this life uncomplainingly, but now, I have enough of it." All this Mr. Raymond had uttered with great resolution, but now, the thought of his family, how *they* would take it, clouded his features

again. Too well he knew what was expected of him, for a few days after his wife's funeral, when his relations came to condole with him, they had plainly informed him of their wishes and hopes, and an aunt, of more than eighty years of age, who never had the chance of losing a partner for life, had told him that they all felt and sympathized with him in his great affliction, but, at the same time, had come to the conclusion that he could console himself with the thought that it might be still worse. He had, not only dear Maud, who now and then would look after him, but also Amanda, his daughter-in-law, who, at any time of the day, could and would attend to his and his family's comfort. He had tried to believe all this, repeated it to himself when sorely vexed, but, of late, had not succeeded in finding comfort from this well-meant consolation, and, therefore, came to the conclusion—that he would look out for a wife.

This determination once made, he felt somewhat relieved; yet there remained many buts and ifs which had to be considered before he could take any further steps in the matter.

First and foremost, *where* and *whom* should he choose? He said to himself that, being a widower, of a certain age, with children, although rich, he must, in some measure, be moderate in his expectations, for widowers are generally not run after, especially by *young* ladies; and, as *Spring* always had been his favorite season, he did not see the necessity for renouncing this preference in the selection of a sweetheart; therefore, *youthful* the sweetheart must be, who, in the course of time, should become Mrs. Raymond. He was aware that this might prove a difficult condition, and, therefore, he said to himself that money should be no object in his choice; this want would be the easier for him to overlook, as he had enough of what the world treasures so highly. Good family, however, should make up for absence of the metal, and there he *would* be particular, as he had a right to be, for he could be proud of his name.

Having settled thus far, he looked about him through all R——, allowing his mind's eye to pass from house to house, stopping here, and pondering there, approving, doubting, and again rejecting, until, at last, with surprise and admirable truthfulness, he

confessed to himself that there was not one *young* lady whom he believed would respond to his proposal, and that of those of a later season he would not care to ask the all-important question. Whence, then, should his sweetheart come?

A long while Mr. Raymond sat, trying to solve this question, until, at last, a smile played over his features, and removing his pipe from his lips, he knocked out the ashes, thereby showing that the resolve was taken and the question answered.

CHAPTER II.

THE FIRST MEETING.

Two or three days after, Mr. Raymond was sitting in his office, several newspapers were lying before him, and his son Maurice was diligently perusing the contents of one, when an "Upon my word!" from him made his father start and move uneasily in his seat.

"Listen, Father, this is extraordinary," and he read aloud:—"A widower, of ample means and good position, wishes to make the acquaintance of a *young* lady, with a view to matrimony. Money not required. Address, R. S. Post Restante."

"Now, what *gentleman*, who has a fortune and moves in good society, can be under the necessity of advertising for a wife? And what kind of a woman must *she* be, who would respond to such a proposal?"

"The gentleman may not be a very young man—may have children, and, therefore, obliged to be hum-

ble," said Mr. Raymond, with rather a faint attempt to be charitable.

"Pshaw!" was Maurice's contemptuous answer. "I should like to see the answers to this advertisement, though; it must be great fun."

"I dare say, to those not interested in the matter. However, do you not think it time to look after that little business transaction we were speaking about yesterday?"

"You are right," said the younger; "I shall see to it at once;" and taking his hat left the room.

When his son had gone, Mr. Raymond pulled out his handkerchief hastily, to wipe off the drops of perspiration that had gathered upon his forehead, took hold of a paper, and fanned himself violently.

"A few more such remarks," he thought "and I shall feel thoroughly ashamed of myself. What if, in some way, it should be found out, that *I* am the author of this advertisement?" As this thought presented itself to him in its whole force, he rose from his seat, quickly pacing the room, in thorough discomfort. "I have begun now, however, and I shall proceed," he went on, consoling himself;

"It is their own fault. Had I consulted with them, as I should have liked to do, they would never have consented; it would have created only a terrible revolution, without doing any good; the whole family would have been in arms against me, and peace and rest strangers to me, henceforth. Had I announced my intention, I should have been closely watched, and my most harmless actions misconstrued. No, I am in for it now, and shall go on!"

Three days had passed since Mr. Raymond had determined to follow up his intentions of procuring a sweetheart, in such a very unromantic manner, when he entered his dwelling, hurried to his room, locked the door carefully behind him, and drew from his pocket a parcel of letters. Then settling himself in an arm chair, he took them up, one by one, closely examining the different handwriting.

"Now for their contents," he murmured. He broke the seals and commenced reading them by turns, throwing some away, with a contemptuous remark; smiling at others, until only one was left.

"All declare that they are young, handsome ladies, and highly educated, not thinking that the miserable

spelling of their odious epistles would put the latter out of the question. To call themselves educated, without being able to write their own language properly!" and a sarcastic laugh broke from his lips. "Serves me right, however. Why did I stoop to such means to find a sweetheart? I might have known that none but such would answer me. Here is the last," he continued, twirling it between his fingers, and looking at it doubtfully. "She, of course, also considers herself young, although the shape of these letters is as old-fashioned as if my grandmother had traced them. Let us see what the handsome writer has to say for herself."

"By Jupiter! this is queer and refreshing!" he exclaimed, after having finished the missive; then read aloud—"Eighteen years of age, and, as youth in itself is a beauty and a charm, consequently beautiful and charming. Poor, since you have no objection, and, therefore, *not* educated, as usually is expected of a lady. Inquire at the North End of Mary Street, after the 'Large Farm.' L——."

"This letter is somewhat promising by its very unpromising contents," Mr. Raymond muttered,

smilingly, and refolded the paper. "L——; that is the Capital, and Mary Street I know well. I shall set out to-morrow. These," taking the other letters, "shall be answered thus"—and he held each separately to the light, watching them flicker and burn to ashes. As the last spark died out he rang the bell, telling his servant to have his traveling bag packed, and the carriage before the door, at eight o'clock the next morning, to take him to the railway station.

At eleven o'clock the next morning Mr. Raymond reached L——. From the railway depot, he proceeded to one of the first hotels of the city, where he was well known. After having partaken of some refreshment, he freed himself from the dust of his journey, and started upon his search.

He entered Mary Street, with its stately old buildings, and after nearly an hour's walk, reached the last house, which proved to be a baker's store.

Before his view opened the country, beautiful and sunny, refreshing to his sight, with its shades and lights, its green meadows and loaded fruit trees, its little snowy cottages peeping through the dense foli-

age, and further off, its handsome country seats. He entered the store and inquired, of a comfortable looking individual, who had been dozing in the sunshine near a window, and who opened his eyes sleepily at his entrance, after the "Large Farm."

The man, leaving his seat reluctantly, led him back to the entrance. There, shading his eyes with one of his fat, large hands, he pointed with the other to a very small house that could be seen in the distance, shining, with its white walls, through the large, old trees that surrounded it. "There is the place," he said. "You see the narrow footpath that leads from the road through the fields? follow it; it brings you straight to the 'Large Farm.'"

"That!" Mr. Raymond asked, both astonished and dismayed. "Why, there is not more than an acre of land, scarcely that; and, and"—

"And you expected to find a handsome, large farm, with extensive fields, meadows, and orchards?" the man interrupted him, smiling placidly; "yes! yes! and these are the remains of such a one."

"Thank you," replied Mr. Raymond, and departed,

with a sinking heart, taking the road to the miniature dwelling.

His heart beat almost audibly with expectation, as he neared the destination of his journey. "Where is the good old family upon which I meant to insist so tenaciously in my choice of a wife?" he asked himself, as he looked upon the humble place. "Surely, not there. A peasant's daughter might live there—nothing more—with, perhaps, that beauty which peasants so much admire—red cheeks, white teeth, and a pair of stout arms, that could work well, and a loud voice, with which to shout pert replies to men in the fields. Whither has my folly led me?" Such were his desponding thoughts, as he opened the gate and stepped into the pretty flower garden.

Stillness all around; nothing but the singing of the birds, and the chirrup of some chickens, skipping in the graveled path of the garden, was heard.

He hesitated; at last he heard a light step of some one moving swiftly inside of the cottage. The front door opened quickly, and a young girl appeared in the doorway.

Mr. Raymond moved back one step, and an exclamation of surprise escaped his lips. Was it reality or a vision that dazzled his eyes? Was he dreaming or awake? Who was this beautiful creature, with a form so graceful and stately; with eyes so proud and brilliant; with skin tanned a little, yet delicate as a peach; and lips so full and tempting, still, so firm in their expression? Whence came this lovely apparition, to whom he now involuntarily bowed as low as if she were a queen, yet who was clad in the simple attire of a peasant girl? The pointed cap, with its black, broad ribbon tied loosely beneath the faultless dimpled chin; the dark short skirt, with its silver border and scarlet cloth corsage; the under-bodice white as snow, the bands of whose full sleeves clung lovingly around her slender wrists, ending in ruffles of wide lace, that fell upon the slightly browned hands, and the long, shining braids of chestnut color, with their ends of scarlet ribbon, which almost touched the bottom of the ample skirt.

“You are a stranger, and have lost your way?” asked a rich, full voice, and the girl stepped from the house. The almost stern expression around the

mouth disappeared, and a smile of childlike sweetness and gentleness parted her beautiful lips. "Can I be of any service to you, sir?"

Mr. Raymond was unable to answer. Utterly confused he stood before her. He had recovered from the surprise of having been so unexpectedly confronted by so lovely a being; but what confounded him now, and made him feel still more foolish, was the entire want of embarrassment in the girl's manner. No blush, no timid shrinking, or tremble of her voice, led him to suppose that he must have been expected. Frankly she looked him in the eyes, her countenance expressing only wonder at his not answering her question. *She* could not have penned that letter, he thought, within himself, or else she would not now stand before him so unconscious of it, nor could those large brown eyes have waited so innocently and unflinchingly for his answer.

At last he stammered forth: "I am a stranger, and must have made a mistake."

"I thought so; here, however, comes my grandmother; she will put you all right. Grandmother, this gentleman has lost his way Good evening, sir;"

and with a careless nod of her beautiful head she turned, and, taking a hoe from a branch of a tree, walked down the path towards the fields.

His eyes followed her until she had disappeared behind the bushes; then he turned and perceived, standing before him, an old woman bent by age, watching him closely with her honest, but shrewd and intelligent blue eyes. Her face was browned, from much exposure to the sun, and furrowed and crossed with deep wrinkles.

“Good evening to you, sir,” and a deep courtesy accompanied her greeting. “It was your advertisement, I suppose, I read in the paper? quite by accident, for I seldom see a paper, but, stopping at the baker’s store, over there,” pointing towards the city, “one morning, my eye fell, by chance, upon your notice. It was also myself who answered it. My granddaughter suspects nothing, and I hope, sir, you have said nothing to arouse her suspicion, though it would take long before she would think of anything like that; but she is sharp, and if once she came to know what I have done, she would never forgive me, for although humbly brought up, Edith is very proud.”

"Your assumption is correct, Mrs. ——." He stopped, not knowing how to address the woman, and she, understanding his self-interruption said—

"Adlaw; I am Mrs. Adlaw, a widow, living upon this little place, alone with my grandchild, Edith."

"Mrs. Adlaw," he continued, "I am a widower, with six children, and wealthy; as my relations would have decidedly opposed my intention of marrying a second time, had I informed them of my wish to do so, I resolved to take the matter into my own hands, and therefore proceeded, as you perceive, in this unusual way for a gentleman seeking to become acquainted with a lady, in order to make her my wife, if all should turn out to our mutual satisfaction."

"My grandchild is no lady, but if I judged you rightly as you were watching her going off, you thought that she might easily be turned into one?" said the old dame, proudly and confidently.

Mr. Raymond gave a most ready assent, while an amused smile at her shrewdness crossed his countenance.

"Her very beauty," the widow continued, "suggested the idea to me, of her being too good to be—"

come the wife of a peasant, but I never clearly knew how I could prevent it. The sons of the neighboring peasants are all crazy about her; she even had, young as she is, several offers from well-to-do tradesmen from town, but her pride has, until now, helped me wonderfully in my endeavors to keep those wooers at a distance. She is kind and sociable with all, but no more. As soon as one of them wishes to show her more marked attentions she freezes him into silence. She has an insatiable thirst for knowledge and learning. I often heard her desire, when a carriage passed with richly dressed ladies, 'to be one of them, to have the means to procure books and study music;' but my resources are limited, and I cannot afford to gratify her wish. In music she had some instruction, just enough to make her crave for more. An old schoolmaster used to live in our neighborhood. He took a great fancy to her, and taught her upon his piano. She has great musical talent, so he often told me, and advanced greatly under his teaching. He died, and having nobody belonging to him, left the instrument to Edith. This is all I have to say—we are poor, but honest. I had

an only son ; he died when Edith was three years of age. She is uneducated, because I had not the means to procure her teachers. You have seen her, and you may think the matter over. Bear in mind that I do not mean to sell her to the highest bidder ; I love her dearly, and only wish for her happiness. The thought that I am old, and that she soon will be without any protection, and, also, that she could never be happy married to a man with a less lofty mind than her own, induced me to answer your advertisement. If you can love her, and make her love you, I would gladly part with her, knowing that it would secure her happiness ; but if her heart should not respond to your wishes, I should not desire the match. You said you have six children. I do not know your name, as yet."

"My name is Raymond ; I have two children married, the third is still single, but old enough to take to himself a wife."

"They might give her a deal of annoyance ; step-mothers are not always liked."

"They would never annoy *my* wife," was his short

reply, and the shrewd woman read in his eyes that they would, indeed, not dare, if he wished it so.

"This is all we have to say to each other, now," she continued; "you cannot win her affections in a few days, and you must, besides, be very cautious to let it appear before her as if your first meeting had been an accident. You have not said any thing to disturb her?" she asked again.

"Nothing. In fact, I was, at first, so surprised at meeting such great beauty, and afterwards so much confused at her evident unconsciousness of her, or, rather, your letter, that I said very little."

"This is right. I leave every thing, then, to you and your sagacity. Mind," she added, seriously, "never offer yourself to her, unless you mean to make her happy."

He gave her his hand, saying, "I shall come again," and they parted, he looking in vain for the lovely maiden who had captivated him on her first appearance.

Thoughtfully he walked back to town, musing deeply on the next step he had to take in the matter. That she should become his wife, if it was in his

power, he firmly resolved, for already the charming face had taken hold of his heart—as young now, aye, even younger, than when he had wooed his first wife, for *she* had been chosen for him by his parents, while for this one his own heart spoke and wished.

CHAPTER III.

THE WOOING BEGINS.

As dusk set in, Edith came back to the house, telling her grandmother that she had finished her task in the field, and inquiring, carelessly, where the gentleman had come from? Mrs. Adlaw told her, in a few words, as much as she thought necessary at the time, and the subject was dropped.

Mr. Raymond, however, gave more thought to the object of his admiration, and the occurrence of the afternoon. Nearly all night he sat up in his chamber at the hotel, reflecting over the matter. The longer he pondered, the firmer the image of the lovely girl grew into his heart, and, with joy almost painful, he pictured to himself the time when she, in her great beauty, should reign as queen among the proud circle of his friends. They, he resolved at once, should never find out where she came from, and, least of all, by what means he had discovered

such a rare flower. He would not give them an opportunity to look down upon her, on account of her low parentage. As a costly pearl he would watch her, and tenderly shield her. But, to shine, as by her loveliness was her right, she, also, had to be made acquainted with the strict etiquette of society; her mind had to be cultivated, and her talents, surely not of inferior order, must be given a chance to develop themselves. How to do this needed now his first attention. He would not send her to a boarding school, for his already jealous heart told him that to bring one so inexperienced as Edith into contact with girls of her own age, filled with thoughts of romance—lovers, dresses, and other such nonsense—might infect the mind of this pure child of nature, and put ideas into her head injurious to him, as well as to herself. At last he remembered the only lately established “Finishing Schools,” as they were called. His eyes lit up with pleasure, and a sigh of relief eased his breast. This was the very thing for Edith, and to one of those schools she should go, if her grandmother would consent. On that score he had no doubt, for the old woman

seemed to possess a great deal of good common sense, and was anxious for the welfare of her grandchild. On the morrow he would inform her of his plan, and then inquire cautiously about a suitable establishment in which to place Edith, and, in the meantime, use all his leisure time to win her affection.

The following day he first visited some business friends, and succeeding well with them, sent home several orders, to be filled immediately, thus setting his mind at rest by showing his sons *what* had taken him from home. Next he went into a book store, purchasing a book on history, carefully written and attractively told, so as to make its contents pleasant to peruse, and easily understood by beginners. Then he set out for the "Large Farm."

As he neared it he saw the old woman sitting upon a bench before the house, busily knitting, and Edith weeding in a flower-bed near by. The noise of the opening latch made both of them look up, and, on perceiving him, the girl called out: "Grandmother, here, again, is the gentleman from yesterday. Good evening, Sir," and then resuming her work, uncon-

cernedly, left it to Mrs. Adlaw to receive Mr. Raymond.

"You see I have come again," he said, aloud; then lowering his voice to the woman—"Have you mentioned my name to your granddaughter?"

"There was no occasion," she answered, in the same subdued key.

"Then do not," he said, "until I have given you my reason for my request."

For a moment Mrs. Adlaw looked suspiciously into his face, but the unflinching, honest look with which he returned her gaze reassured her. "Will you walk in, Sir?" she asked, opening the gate for him.

"If I am welcome."

As an answer she stepped back a little, to allow him to pass into the garden.

"Your grandchild is industrious, I see?"

"She has to be so, for we are poor, and cannot afford to hire help; and I am enfeebled by age, and not able to do much hard work."

"You remarked yesterday that she is fond of reading. I have brought with me a book for her."

Edith stopped her work instantaneously, on hearing this, and turning towards him a face covered with blushes, and eyes shining with joy, exclaimed, "O, Sir! how kind! how very thoughtful!"

Mrs. Adlaw smiled, greatly pleased, and Mr. Raymond's heart beat high, when, drawing the book from his pocket, and giving it to Edith, she caught his hand, imprinting a grateful kiss upon it, before he had time to prevent it.

"Nay, nay," he said, smiling, "this little present deserves not such great thanks. I only wished to please you, and besides, I have to make a condition."

Mrs. Adlaw looked warningly up, as if to say, "you are too quick;" but Mr. Raymond continued quietly, "This book contains the history of our country; the most important facts, only, and they are very entertainingly told. I wish you to read it; and by to-morrow evening, if your grandmother allows it, I shall come again, and hear how much you have read, and how you have mastered its contents."

"This is a most delightful condition, and I have to thank you afresh, for the interest you take in such an ignorant girl as I am;" and she made

him a low courtesey, her features radiant with the anticipated pleasure of having a book to read, all her own. "Grandmother, may I leave my work to have a peep at my present?" she asked, timidly, throwing, at the same time, a shy glance at the giver.

"By all means, go, and feed on it, if you wish," answered Mrs. Adlaw, greatly pleased with the whole proceeding. In an instant the girl was off, leaving the two alone.

I have much to explain to you," said Mr. Raymond, "and I suppose we may rely upon an hour's quiet conversation, now that your granddaughter is so satisfactorily employed?"

She smiled her assent.

"I have thought it all over, as you, no doubt, have done also," he continued. "You must be aware that, beautiful as Edith is, I could not introduce her to my family and friends, uneducated as she is at present; not that I would object to it for my own sake, but for her own happiness, I could not do it. Unacquainted as she is with the rules of society, she would feel constantly hurt and annoyed; her beauty might carry the day, and procure her admiration for

a time, but once the novelty worn off, and people became familiar with her loveliness, they would grow weary of the charming girl on discovering that the beautiful casket was empty, and that her mind did not correspond to the radiant exterior. The most exquisite beauty will weary us, if the soul is wanted; that gives expression to the features, and the most bewitching lips lose their charm, if they utter nothing but empty sayings. You understand me?"

"I follow you, Sir; go on."

"Therefore," he continued, "although, at my age, a year is a long time, I shall try to get her into a Finishing School—if you consent to it."

"What do you mean by a Finishing School? I have heard of Institutes for girls to become educated in, but never of this new invention."

"It means to place, for a certain time, a young girl in a family of high standing—a family moving in select and refined society; one with children of their own; daughters of the same age as the young lady who is thus admitted into their home; becoming one of them, she is treated, for the time, as their own daughter; instructed by the lady of the house in the

secrets of housekeeping, as particularly as her own child; presented in society, surrounded by home influences, kept secure from bad example by the pure, beneficial air of home love and domestic happiness; watched over by a lady who has a mother's heart, with which to judge her faults leniently, and by which she is led to understand the little troubles of a young girl, and to sympathize with her in those, to her, so all-important sorrows; supplied with teachers, who come to instruct her in all the different branches in which she wishes to become perfect; constantly watched, yet never so that she feels overburdened by it, or overawed and frightened into deceit. Thus treated, confidence for confidence, seeing nothing but refined, well-bred manners, hearing only the expression of well-cultivated minds, meeting with none but those fit to associate with—gentlewomen and gentlemen—how can it fail that the budding heart of a young girl, so impressible for good or evil, should open to receive the benefits of such surroundings, and enable her to go forth, after her time is passed, to her own pure home, bringing with her a happy, joyous heart to be a help there, an ornament in so-

ciety, and later in life a good wife and loving mother, able to distribute *that* happiness among her own family which she had herself enjoyed."

"This is a picture of what they call 'Finishing Schools.' They are sometimes found and preferred in foreign countries, so that the young girl so placed may acquire the strange language in its perfection. Sometimes daughters are exchanged. For instance, a family in France sends its daughter to friends in Germany, who send their child to France. Often the family of a clergyman is selected, as such always are considered highly educated, and, by their position, move in good circles. In such a school I should wish Edith to be placed."

"This would be very excellent," replied Mrs. Adlaw, "but do you know of such a family?"

"Not yet; but I shall endeavor to find one. It is more difficult for me to do so, as I cannot openly inquire, and have to move very cautiously in the matter. I have no doubt, however, that I shall succeed."

"Why shall I not mention your name to my grandchild?" Mrs. Adlaw looked sharply at him,

and he hesitated a little while before answering. At last, conquering his evident confusion, he said, "You will pardon me, Mrs. Adlaw, if, in the explanation I have to give, I should hurt your feelings, but, since it is best to speak openly to each other, I must go on. Were I less sincere, I might be more polite. It must remain for ever a secret, resting only between us two, *how* I became acquainted with your granddaughter; it must be so, for my sake, as well as hers. You agree with me in this?"

"Entirely. Proceed."

"But I also wish it to remain a secret, *where*"—he hesitated.

"I understand you," she said, sadly. "I expected it; you do not want to have it known where she comes from. I have thought it over, and, *as it is*," she spoke these words slowly, as if still undecided; "I consent to this, knowing something of the world's prejudices. But, Sir," and her voice faltered, though she tried hard not to show it, "I must see her sometimes; she would not wish to forget me."

"Forgive me, for thus paining you;" he took her hand gently, and there was a tone of genuine

sorrow in his voice: "I do not mean to go *that* far. She may spend the summer with you, if she and you wish it. I should, indeed, be sorry if Edith had so little heart as to wish to leave you for ever. I will bring her myself, and remain as much with *our* old grandmother as I can; and you must understand me rightly, I do not wish this for *my* sake, but, alone, for *hers*. You do not know my family"—he involuntarily shuddered, when he thought of the insolent looks his daughter-in-law would throw upon Edith, were she to know her parentage; and he grew fierce, as he pictured to himself the cold hauteur with which Maud would regard his beautiful wife—"and cannot be aware," he continued, "of how coldly she would be received by all of them, if they knew everything. Therefore I must beg of you to think my request over, and try to reconcile yourself to it."

"I will accede to everything, now, since I shall see her often. But why not mention your name to her now?"

"Because, if I find a school for her, it is only through some friend of mine, and she might easily, when once there, mention my name, and my friends

would probably hear of it, suspect, and at last find it out. A stepmother is not always lovingly received by relatives of the first wife, who are glad to find something against the second. Of course, afterwards, when she is once betrothed to me, I do not care, but before something definite is settled between us, she might know me as, Mr. Sulgar."

"Do you not intend to speak to her on the subject, before you place her in a school?"

"I think not—that is, I do not know. It depends solely upon her, and until I have done so, I should not wish her to know my name. I do not like this, but I think it is best so. Do not tell her any name at all, until she asks for it. You, of course, will have to bring her to the school, if I am so fortunate as to find one, for I must appear in the matter as little as possible. However, think it carefully over; if you should discover a good reason for giving my real name, let me know, and we shall speak about it again. The 'little one' does not come again," he added, smilingly; "flattering to the book, but not complimentary to me. I shall see you both again to-morrow; until then, good-bye."

“Good-bye, Sir, I believe you mean well by her.”

“You may be sure of that,” he replied, fervently,
“and I sincerely wish and hope to win her affection.”

CHAPTER IV.

TOO IMPATIENT.

The following day Mr. Raymond was received in a different, and, to him, more pleasing manner than the evening before. From afar, he noticed Edith leaning against the gate, expecting his arrival, and a joyous "he is coming, Grandmother," reached his ear at the distance.

"Good evening, Sir," she said, eagerly, as soon as he was near her. "I have been waiting for you since four o'clock, and feared that you might be prevented from coming. I have read my book through, twice. O, Sir! how can I thank you enough for this great treat. I know all the chief points in it by heart, as you will see when you question me." Her cheeks flushed, and her eyes sparkled, from inward excitement. She had spoken so rapidly, that neither he nor her grandmother, who, in the meantime, had left her seat and greeted Mr. Raymond with a courtesey,

had had time to put in a word; but now, Mrs. Adlaw said, "My child, this kind gentleman does not mean to leave us instantly, therefore you will have time to express yourself in a less hurried manner. Sir," she continued, addressing herself to him, "you may judge by this outburst, how greatly you have pleased my grandchild by your present, and, also, how warmly she feels your kindness."

"No apology is needed, I assure you. Your granddaughter could not have chosen a more expressive way to show me that my small gift is appreciated," and his looks rested lovingly upon her candid features, now covered with blushes. "Let us rest upon that shady seat, Mrs. Adlaw, and Edith and I shall soon be friends."

The examination began. She answered every question, from first to last, with remarkable promptitude and accuracy, surprising Mr. Raymond by the manner she had understood and mastered her lesson. He discovered a memory of unusual tenacity, and an intellect quite in accordance with her speaking features.

"The most exacting taskmaster could not find

fault with your answers, little one," he said, smilingly, when he had done; "and, to reward you, I have brought"—he put his hand in his pocket, and no child, expecting sweetmeats, could have followed his every movement with a more greedy look than Edith, as, with eyes shining, and half opened lips, she watched his hand as it disappeared behind his back—"another book," he said, placing it into her outstretched hand; "it is about the same subject, only written in more erudite language, and giving all the particulars of our national history."

She untied the cord impatiently, and opened the cover; then raising her eyes, she asked, thoughtfully, "are you a friend of my grandmother, Sir, that you take such an interest in me?"

"Her friend, as well as yours, Edith, if you will let me," he answered, earnestly.

"It is not difficult to accept such a friend as you. It is I who gain by it, more than you."

"I am satisfied that you should think so."

"And now, may I take my book and retire?"

"Are you so soon tired of your friend that you wish to leave him as soon as you have something

that interests you more?" asked Mr. Raymond, reproachfully.

"What pleasure could my society have for you, Sir? I am young, and know not how to amuse you. My grandmother is a more fit companion for you."

If she could have known how cruelly she stabbed him, with these innocent and humble words; but she only noticed his sad smile, and heard his gentle response.

"Your grandmother told me that you play upon the piano; will you not play for me?"

"Anything to please you Sir; I am only sorry that I am so ignorant as not to be able to entertain you as I should wish to do."

"Only love me a *little*," he whispered, as they entered the lowly dwelling, "I shall be satisfied with that."

"How could I help liking you," she answered, readily, "when you are so good to me."

"Liking!" he thought to himself, "she understands me not. Will she ever?" he sighed, unconsciously.

"Why are you sad, all of a sudden? Grandmother

is sometimes this way, and when I ask her the reason, she says that old people often have serious thoughts, and cannot always be gay. Is it so with you, too? You are not so old, Sir; and you are rich, I judge, and can buy anything you wish for, so you ought to be happy."

"Not every thing, 'little one;' there you are mistaken. Money does not buy love."

"And do they not love you at home? How strange! I should think it an easy thing to love you; you are so kind."

His features had grown sadder and more mournful at every new sentence she uttered, but as she pronounced the last words his looks became hopeful again. He took her hand eagerly, pressing it warmly, and asked, "Will you try to love me, Edith? It would make me so very happy."

"I do so already," she answered, too readily and too frankly for him to feel joy at her answer. He thought to himself, however, that he must not ask too much at once, that her feelings ought not to be forced, and that he must wait patiently, and give her time. Therefore, he said, as composedly as he could, "We

have forgotten the music," and opened the old instrument for her.

She, of course, did not play brilliantly, but she executed the few easy sonatas she had learned with great precision and true expression. Her execution was nothing grand or dazzling, but Mr. Raymond could discover that she had talent and taste, and would become an excellent player, if properly taught.

"You must have a teacher," he said, when she had finished.

"My grandmother cannot afford it, else she would have had me taught long ago."

Mr. Raymond only smiled, and they went out into the garden again. "I must say good-bye, now. Promise me, Edith, that you will practice upon the piano diligently and regularly, and not forget your history."

"You may depend upon it, Sir. To fulfill your wishes will give me pleasure."

"Look at those chickens, child," said Mrs. Adlaw; "they are among your flowers; go and chase them away. You are too impatient," turning to Mr. Raymond, when Edith had left them. "I could not help

hearing you; the window was open. She cannot be won by storm; you will spoil all. I know her too well. Kindness wins her affection soonest; let her have time. When you are gone she will miss you; that will serve you most."

"You are right; I must control myself in future. Good-bye, Edith," he called.

"Until to-morrow, Sir," she said, coming up hurriedly, and taking his outstretched hand.

"You may be sure of that," he replied, and with another pressure he left the garden.

When he looked back, after a while, she was still standing at the fence, following him with her eyes.

When Mr. Raymond visited the cottage the fourth time, Edith was again waiting for him, but not exhibiting the joyous eagerness with which she had received him the day before. Her face was overcast, her eyes were serious, and she regarded him with a timid look.

"What is it, 'little one,'" he asked, taking her hand lovingly in his; "what is amiss, that you have no smiles to welcome me?"

"O, Sir!" she answered, hanging down her head,

"you will be displeased with me ; I do not know my lesson."

"Would it grieve you so very much, if I should be displeased. Tell me," he added, eagerly, "do you really care how I feel toward you?" He waited anxiously for her reply.

She raised her eyes at once, and looking full into his, said, "You know it, for I told you so yesterday."

He let go her hand, asking, "Was the book too difficult for you? I expected it, but I wanted to find out how much you could understand of it yourself."

"Did you, indeed, think I might not be able to learn all perfectly?" and her face brightened, and that bewitching smile, that made her whole face full of tender lights, parted her lips.

"I tried very hard, but there are expressions and words whose meaning I could not make out."

"You will soon learn, I doubt not, 'little one.' Bring your book and I will explain everything to you. Where is your grandmother?"

"Out in the field. She will soon be back. Here is the book."

Thus Mrs. Adlaw found them, sitting side by

side, she listening intently to every word he said, questioning and inquiring, until the old woman thought that Mr. Raymond must get tired and wearied at last. Had Edith gone on for ever he would have joyfully sat there, happy to have her with him, and watching her drinking so confidingly and trustingly all that fell from his lips.

When the lesson was finished, he produced a piece of music. It was an easy composition, on the sweet and pleasing air, 'Annchen von Tarau.' "Do you know this melody?" and he hummed the tune for her.

"I never heard it before, but the ear catches it quickly, for it is very pretty."

"It is a favorite air of mine. Will you try to learn it for me?"

"With great pleasure, Sir, and I hope when you come to-morrow, I shall be able to play it for you. I shall try very hard, and, as for the book, I shall now take it up with a good heart, for you have removed all the difficulties. You are not going, already?" she added, seeing him taking out his watch.

"Do you wish me to stay?" he asked, gladly surprised at her request. "You usually run away from me, as soon as your lesson is over."

"Oh, Sir! you have grown less strange to me, and I believe, now, that my ignorance does not weary you."

"How did you find this out, 'little one?'" he cried, almost unable to suppress his delight at her words, and wishing that he dared to press her to his heart.

A sly smile played around the corners of her lovely mouth, and then she said, while playing with the corner of her apron, "you need not come again, Sir, if you do not wish."

"Do you also know why"—

A crash and a fall hindered him from finishing his hasty speech, and set Edith running toward the house, from which her grandmother emerged immediately, whispering to the astounded gentleman, "Sir! Sir! what are you about? Can you not see and understand that the child's mind is on the eve of awakening, and that one incautious move may frighten her in the wrong direction?"

"I have only three more days left; I cannot remain longer away from home."

"Expect the most from your absence. Be kind to her *now*, and let *that* work until your return. You can do no more; at least nothing that would favor your wishes more advantageously."

"I can discover nothing wrong, inside, Grandmother. A tin lid has fallen down, that is all."

"So much the better for our crockery," said Mrs. Adlaw, suppressing a smile.

Mr. Raymond staid some time longer, and then took his leave, pondering joyfully, all the way home, upon Edith's words; but telling himself that Mrs. Adlaw was right, and that he *must* control his feelings, hard as it might be for him to do so.

CHAPTER V.

AGREEMENTS.

The fifth and sixth visits passed much like the fourth. That Edith now welcomed his arrival with joy, and saw him depart with regret, he knew. "But should *this* be all?" he asked himself, while going to pay her another visit, in order to bid them farewell. Should he never be able to kindle her feelings into love? Would her truthful eyes never reflect those love-lights which flashed and shone in his? Should it, after all his own passionate, tender yearning, be left to another, more fortunate and younger one, to gather this flower, by him so greatly prized? When the year had passed, and to the beauty of form and features the charms of a ripened and cultivated mind had been added, should all this pass from him into the possession of some other man? O, these torturing thoughts, these cruel reflections, which constantly racked his heart with anguish; yet which,

nevertheless, he told himself must be pursued and held fast, to prevent his clinging firmly and securely to the one desire of his heart; the worst anticipations he must ever hold before his mind's eye, in order that, if his most cherished hopes should be dashed to the ground, it would not bow him too low; and in spite of all these doubts, he would go on disinterestedly; he would do all to raise her higher, and to give her that boon for which her intellect thirsted, even if it should not be for himself; perhaps this very disinterestedness might, in time, turn her heart to him. Thus he reasoned, and resolved to act.

"I knew you would come earlier," she greeted him, when he was yet at a distance; "for it is to be your last visit," she added, looking sadly into his eyes. "O, Sir! all your manifold kindnesses stand doubly before my mind, now that the time has come when I must do without them."

"I shall come again, 'little one,'" he said, as quietly as he was able, for her tremulous voice nearly upset all his good resolutions, leaving Love and Reason to fight a hard battle in his breast at that moment.

"Yes; so you tell me, Sir; but it will be a weary time."

"At the longest, only two weeks, Edith, and I have brought you more books and music, which will divert your mind, and make the days pass more quickly."

"What! more books?" she cried, eagerly, forgetting in her new treasures the sorrow of the moment before. "Thank you! thank you! Now, indeed, the time will not seem so long. I shall learn industriously, and when you return you shall see, Sir, that you have not been thoughtful of me in vain."

Mr. Raymond answered only by a sigh. His hopes, raised so high an instant before, had been dashed rudely to the ground.

All at once, as if the thought had just struck her suddenly, she said, "you never told me by what name I might remember you. I have thought of you, always, as the kind gentleman. Will you tell me now by what name I may think of you?"

Mr. Raymond started, at first, at this unexpected inquiry; but noticing, with pleasure, *how* she put the question, he answered, "*think* of me, as Mr. Sulgar."

"Sulgar?" she repeated after him, as if trying to impress it upon her mind. "I shall not forget it."

"And now, Edith, I have to tell you some good news. Call your grandmother, she will be glad to hear it."

Mrs. Adlaw came, and all three sat together upon the bench

"'Little one,' what would you say if we had found a school for you, where you might learn languages, music, history, and so forth?"

"I should say that nothing would please me better."

"Well, Mrs. Adlaw, I have succeeded, and found one, through the interference of a friend. I do not know the family, personally, but I shall read to you the description my friend gives me of it, by way of recommendation."

"Excuse me, Sir," interrupted Edith, who had listened with breathless surprise; "before you go any further, may I ask, who is to pay for it?"

Mr. Raymond smiled, and said, "I will. Have you any objection, 'little one?'"

"Thank you, for your well-meant kindness, Sir,"

she answered, and around her mouth was visible that stern expression he had noticed the first time he had seen her; "but I cannot go to that school."

"Why not, Edith?"

She threw her head slightly back, and replied, looking him straight in the face, "My grandmother must not incur a debt on my behalf, which I know she would never be able to repay."

A glance of admiration passed over his features at this proud and unexpected remonstrance, while Mrs. Adlaw smiled approvingly.

"But how if *you* could repay it? Would you then still be too proud to contract the debt?" he asked

"Then, Sir, I should accept your kind offer at once, with many thanks," she promptly replied.

"Very well, Edith, you *can* repay it."

"How?" she asked, with flashing eyes and heightened color.

He hesitated, greatly tempted. Here was an opportunity to make her his own, by a sense of gratitude and duty. Only for a moment, however, this irresolution lasted, then he said, "in a year hence, I will tell you, Edith."

"Upon your honor, Sir?"

"Upon my honor," he replied, gravely; "you shall then hear the equivalent I ask. Are your scruples pacified?"

"They are, Sir, and I accept your kindness with many thanks. But my grandmother; did she know of this?"

"I did," said Mrs. Adlaw, "and agreed to it."

"And now, for my friend's answer," and Mr. Raymond commenced to read: 'You have knocked at the right door. I am acquainted with the very family you wish to find. Mr. Wolden was, in his younger days, tutor to the sons of Duke Oswald. On his tour, which he made with his two pupils through Europe, he met his present wife at a ball at the Austrian Court. At that time she was a girl of eighteen years, with great personal, as well as mental attractions. He fell in love with her, and two years afterwards married her. The Grand Duke of Baden, to whom Mr. Wolden had been introduced by Duke Oswald himself, with the warmest expressions of his Grace's greatest regard, raised him to his present position, remaining ever since his particular protector. Mr.

Wolden has several children; among them are two daughters, one of eighteen, and the other one year younger. French is, I believe, the language chiefly spoken in that family, as Mr. Wolden's wife is a French lady by birth. I need only add that this highly connected and estimable family lives in Freiburg, that lovely city *we* know so well. Judge for yourself now, and let me hear your answer speedily, and I will make the necessary arrangements.'"

"Edith, what answer shall I give my friend?" asked Mr. Raymond, refolding the letter. "You know of your future home as much, now, as I do; does this description tempt you sufficiently to make you wish to go there?"

"I wish for it very much, Sir, but what will these great people think of me, who am so ignorant, knowing nothing of their manners and ways?"

"On that score you may rest secure; their very refinement will make you feel at ease, and in a short time you will feel at home among them. The city will delight you, and is in every way adapted to our purpose; for, not only is Freiburg situated at a small distance from the French border, and therefore

has, in a great measure, adopted the easy and elegant manners of that country, but there is, also, a garrison, among whose officers are many nobles, and a university with grave professors and learned savans, as well as eminent merchants, who all mix in friendly, social intercourse. "Into their circle you will be introduced, and there have every opportunity of perfecting yourself in every way."

"Let it be, then, as you wish, Sir."

"Very well. The time has also come for me to bid you good-bye. Farewell, 'little one;' do not forget me, until we meet again. Mrs. Adlaw, farewell."

"Two weeks, Sir?"

"About that time; and then we part for a whole year, for I shall only come back to see you off, to part again."

He left them quickly, never once turning back, and Edith went sadly into the house.

CHAPTER VI.

IN SOCIETY.

Edith arrived in Freiburg in the beginning of September. The city was quiet then, for at the Club House the entertainments had not yet commenced, and the season for pic-nics and excursions had gone by; therefore the young ladies of the town had, in the meantime, to amuse themselves by visiting each other in their houses, and talking over the anticipated pleasure the opening winter season would bring them.

This was an excellent opportunity for Edith to accustom herself to her new home. She had full leisure to watch and observe those around her—their manners and ways, so different from what she had been used to. “Use your eyes and ears, ‘little one,’” were the last words of Mr. Raymond, at parting from her, and she had remembered them and acted upon them. Neither look nor movement of Mrs. Wolden

and her daughters escaped her. None of them could enter the room or take a chair, give an order or receive company, without Edith, when going to her own room, rehearsing it to herself. She modulated her voice to that peculiar softness heard only in refined and well-bred society. She tried to acquire that quiet, easy, sweeping grace, with which the ladies of the house moved about, and entered and left a room. In those low and graceful bows, which from the first she had admired, she was perfect weeks ago. In short, she had used her time well, wonderfully well; for, not only had her outward appearance undergone the greatest change, but her mind, also, had kept pace with the improvement of her personal attractions.

It was now the first week of November, and Mrs. Wolden, after having made all the rounds, with Edith, among her friends, and thus privately made them acquainted with her charge, resolved to give a ball, in order to introduce her, for the first time, into society.

Already her great beauty had drawn the attention of the other sex towards her, and even those of her own were unable to dispute her loveliness; but ad-

miration gave way almost to adoration, when she appeared so surpassingly beautiful on that evening.

The long, thick, dark braids were wound around her shapely head, and raised upon her forehead, resembling a coronet, out of which, like drops of blood, peeped the coral chain that was tastefully interwoven with them. A simple dress of white enclosed her queenly form, floating around her like fleecy clouds. A spray of corals held fast the exquisite lace berthe that fell from her lovely shoulders, and a broad, black velvet ribbon, clasped to her throat by a rosette of corals (a parting gift from Mr. Raymond), increased, by contrast, the pearly whiteness of her skin.

Who would have recognized in that lovely creature, so self-possessed, and moving with such perfect grace, the shy and timid peasant girl of two months back? Who would have suspected that she, who now was answering so readily, and in well-turned phrases, to the pleasant sallies of those around her, only a short time back would not have understood their meaning? Those eyes which, a few weeks back, were ignorant of their destroying power, how brilliantly they flashed now, throwing forth their

dangerous lights. When she glided lightly through the graceful dance, who would have believed that, a short time ago, all this had been an unknown grace to her ?

Yes, Edith's debut was a success; decidedly so; thus thought Mrs. Wolden, and she repeated it proudly, when the ball was over. The whole winter was a succession of amusements, and Edith reigned as their acknowledged queen; loving and tender, clinging and gentle with those around her, whom she had come to love very dearly, her features beaming with sweetness and caressing smiles, while among them, she was an entirely different being when in society. To her acquaintances, those she met there, she was proud, cold, distant; 'condescending,' might be the most correct expression of her demeanor towards them, and therefore she was called by them, "The Duchess."

The winter had passed. Mrs. Adlaw, with Mr. Raymond, who frequently visited the old widow, read Edith's letters with great interest and pleasure, and when Spring had arrived, and both judged from her missives that her whole heart was still given to her

studies, they rejoiced, Mr. Raymond confessing frankly that this had been the season he had been most afraid of, and if fortune would smile upon him only a short while longer, they might have her back again, and, with her affections still unengaged, he might hope and try to gain her love anew.

CHAPTER VII.

AN EXCURSION.

Towards the beginning of June the town of Freiburg became quiet and dull, and several intimate families suggested an excursion to the Titi Sea.

In order to reach this small lake one must pass the "Himmelreich" (Heaven), called thus in reference to its elevation, and in contrast to the frowning gorge which succeeds, known as the "Hölle" (Valley of Hell), which, about nine miles from Freiburg, assumes a character of romantic beauty and grandeur. Its charms consist in the rich foliage of the forests covering its steep sides, out of which project buttresses and pinnacles of bare rock, at the foot of which flows the "Dreisam," bordered with turf and studded with frequent watermills. Even here, its scenery, though wild, exhibits none of those horrors which its name seems to imply.

Edith had heard much of this romantic mountain

pass, and therefore greeted with pleasure the proposal to visit it.

Four families, with their sons and daughters, formed the party. As soon as they had reached where the road begins to ascend the steep slope, the younger members left the carriages and followed on foot, through the "Höllen Thal," leaving behind them the finest scenery. They reached the inn at the same time with the vehicles containing the rest of the company, and there all took quarters for the day, agreeing that, after dinner was over, they would walk to the lake, which lies only a short distance from the inn.

Chatting gayly, laughing and singing, they reached the borders of the lake, and soon were comfortably seated among the bushes and trees on its bank.

Edith had chosen a place a little apart from the merry company. Listening to the chimes of bells sounding from a small chapel over the waters, she was thinking of home and her grandmother, of Mr. Raymond's visits, and his great patience with the ignorant peasant girl. Thus lost in thought, she had forgotten the others, and in living over the past had

lost sight of her surroundings, when, all at once, she was startled from her reveries by a sharp, whistling noise through the air, succeeded by the fall of some heavy object immediately before her. She was on her feet in an instant, and on turning around to discover the cause of this sudden disturbance, stood face to face with a young gentleman, in a light traveling suit. Proudly throwing back her head she measured him from head to foot, with flashing eyes and angrily dilated nostrils, and her looks asked the question her scornfully closed lips would not utter.

“My apology lies here ;” a low bow accompanied these words, while his smiling eyes followed his outstretched hand, which pointed to a large black snake that wreathed and twisted its ugly body in its last death-struggle.

Edith recoiled in terror, growing pale as marble. “I beg your pardon, most sincerely, for having harbored, for one instant, an unkind thought towards the preserver of my life.”

“No apology is needed. I can easily understand how greatly you must have been startled, but there was no help for it ; I had to act without giving you

warning ; one movement by you might have been fatal."

"Say no more, Sir, unless you want to make me feel thoroughly uncomfortable."

The others had noticed the occurrence and drawn near. Mrs. Wolden inquired, what was the matter, and was greatly shocked after having been informed by Edith of her danger, and the timely help from Mr. —— here a look towards the stranger, for enlightenment, interrupted her narrative.

He stepped forward, introducing himself as Maurice Raymond, who, having allowed his traveling carriage to pass on before him, in order to enjoy the scenery in its full beauty, and turning to have a peep at the lake, had seen the young lady, lost in thought, and a large snake, raised almost right in front of her, ready to spring. "Of course," he concluded, "I saw that no moment must be lost, and thus it happens that I have the honor of being introduced to this estimable society."

Mr. Raymond was, naturally, profusely thanked by those most interested in the matter. He was pressed to join the company, at least until they were ready to

start for the city, which would not be before five o'clock in the evening.

He readily consented, as he had intended to stop at the inn. He also stated that he was traveling on business, meaning to remain a week or two at Freiburg, where he had a very intimate school friend, the son of General Potter.

"I am greatly rejoiced to hear this," said Mr. Wolden, "as we are intimately acquainted with this family. We shall then have the pleasure of meeting you often, as we spend our afternoons frequently together, in one of the public gardens in Freiburg."

Mr. Raymond, as may be supposed, monopolized Edith almost the whole time. She became quite friendly with him in the course of the afternoon, and told him that he very much resembled a dear friend of hers, and added, laughingly, that he ought to rejoice at it, as this remarkable likeness alone would prevent her ever forgetting him, even if the great debt she owed him for rescuing her from an untimely end should not be reason enough for always remembering him."

"This *very* dear friend of yours," and he emphasized the 'very,' for already the charms of his companion began to work, and the adverb grated unpleasantly on his ears, "is fortunate to occupy such a warm place in your affections."

"He must always occupy the first place," she answered, gravely, "after my grandmother, who raised me; for I never knew my parents," she concluded sadly.

"Then you are," he asked quickly, but checking himself immediately, said, "I beg your pardon, I presume too much,"

"No; go on," she said, good humoredly, "you are no passing acquaintance; you know *we must* be friends, and must know more of each other, therefore continue."

"I wished to ask, since you are so kind as to permit me—you, then, are not related to the family of Mr. Wolden?"

"Not in the least, though they have all become very dear to me. No, Sir," and she threw back her head, and her eyes said proudly, "despise me, if you dare;" "I am not high-born, as you, perhaps, suppose,

nor am I rich in earthly goods. I know not," she pursued, "what you may think of me now, but I am too proud to seem what I am not. I have all that is worth being proud of, an unblemished name and a clear conscience. That high birth and wealth are not mine, is neither my fault, nor that of those belonging to me. My name is Adlaw—Edith Adlaw—and I am an inmate of Mr. Wolden's family, to learn, to study, in order to become a civilized being;" she finished with a mocking bow.

"Not rich; not highly born;" he said to himself, while his eyes were riveted with admiration upon the beautiful, haughty creature before him. What need had this glorious woman of station and wealth? She who had all, aye, even more than those could bestow.

"Shall we be friends?" she said, interrupting the course of his thoughts, and her voice, so low and melodious, stirred every fibre of his heart.

"If you will honor me with your friendship, I shall prize it most highly." He took her outstretched hand in his, holding it tenderly for an instant. He nearly trembled at the soft light that shone from her

dark eyes, and the sweet smile that lit up her features so radiantly, as he spoke these words.

At parting, he said to Mrs. Wolden that, if she would permit him, he would do himself the honor of inquiring to-morrow how Miss Adlaw had got over her fright. The request was graciously granted, and they parted.

CHAPTER VIII.

LOVE'S STRUGGLE.

The next day Maurice Raymond did not neglect to make use of the permission to inquire after Edith's health ; he went to see her who had made so great an impression upon his mind, and to whom he had become introduced in such an extraordinary manner.

Mrs. Wolden received him, and in the course of his call Edith entered the room. She looked not in the least the worse for the fright she had sustained the day before, and he told her so, with looks that said much more than his words expressed.

"I am sorry to disappoint you," she said, laughingly ; "you know, I am no fine lady, and therefore a shock such as I experienced yesterday must affect me but little ; and although I was dreaming last night of all kinds of reptiles declaring war against me, my nerves are too strong to allow the impress of my agony to be visible to every curious eye. I am one

of the people, and therefore must be brave and courageous; but *you*, 'the knight without fear and reproach,' how have *you* overcome your victory; and do you wear your honors with becoming modesty?"

"If you wish me to be truthful," he answered to her pleasantry, much more earnestly than was required, "I must confess that this is not the exact name I should give the feeling just now reigning in my breast. If you will allow me, I should rather call it pride. I am proud of having had the good fortune to render a service, ever so slight, to you." A passionate look, and a bow, low, as to a queen, gave a meaning to his words, which made Mrs. Wolden raise her brows slightly, and brought the color to Edith's cheeks.

"As you please," she replied, quietly, "It is not for me to correct you."

"Do you stop at the General's house?" Mrs. Wolden asked, after a short pause.

"No; I could not accept their kind invitation to do so, being here on business, and may, perhaps, be obliged to remain a month or longer." Mrs. Wolden, remembering that he had yesterday spoken of

weeks only, suppressed a smile, looking towards Edith, who, with immovable gravity, returned the passing glance. "I could not avoid disturbing the order of their house, as I may often have to be out at uncertain times, therefore I took up my quarters at a hotel; but I shall spend my leisure hours at my friend's house."

"May I take the liberty of giving you a message to Mrs. Potter, if you meet her in the course of the day?"

"Most certainly; I shall deliver it with the greatest pleasure."

"We intend to go, to-morrow afternoon, to Günthersthal. Perhaps they would like to join us there; or we might call for them as we pass."

"Will you let me be the bearer of their answer?" asked Mr. Raymond, eager to embrace any opportunity that might give him an occasion to come again.

"No; thank you, Mr. Raymond, that would be imposing upon you. Our way leads us past the General's house, and we can inquire there, without incommoding you."

"I assure you that it would give me infinite pleasure, if you would allow me to do so."

"If it pleases you, then, I accept your kind offer."

When he called in the afternoon, however, he was greatly disappointed to find the ladies out, and only Mr. Wolden at home to receive his message.

While walking back towards his hotel, his mind was occupied with perplexing thoughts. Reason would not give way to the whisperings of Love, and his heart, in return, obstinately refused to relinquish its claims, but kept on, holding before him the fascinating charms of the girl he had seen that morning. Reason told him that she was poor, and therefore could not mate with him; and Love replied, that he was rich, and consequently need not wish for more. Reason held forth her low parentage, and kept arguing and urging, until Cupid saw his most pointed shafts fall to the ground, and retired despondingly, confessing himself vanquished for the moment. Yes; by the time Maurice Raymond had reached his room, Reason had won the battle, and he decided that to marry into a family inferior to his own would be folly, and he, therefore, would enjoy the society of Miss Adlaw, during his stay in Freiburg, as often as he could, but after that, all further

thought of her must only be a remembrance. Thus fortified, he met his friend, Charles Potter, the General's son.

The following afternoon, according to arrangement, the two families went to Günthersthal. Mr. Raymond had chosen Edith as his companion, and his seat was next to her, after they had reached the charming little garden at the romantically situated village.

The beauties of Nature have a particularly softening influence on men's hearts, and Mr. Raymond was no exception. Reason seemed to have retreated into the back-ground, making room to roguish Love, who was peeping more audaciously than ever through Maurice Raymond's eyes, while answering Edith's questions, and listening to her brilliant conversation. Her poverty and low-birth were forgotten, and he only saw her radiant beauty ; that dazzled his susceptible heart ; and when, in the course of the afternoon, she devoted herself, for some time, to his friend Charles, he grew despondent, answering her casual remarks by monosyllables, until, seeing that she took not the slightest notice of his sadness, but

provokingly kept in good spirits, he became remarkably attentive to the youngest of Mr. Wolden's daughters. Nothing availed him, however, and when the time came to go home, and the party entered the dense woods through which the path leads, he was only too glad that the prevailing darkness allowed him to offer her his arm, and he was transported into entire happiness by her accepting it.

From that afternoon Maurice Raymond was Edith's devoted slave, and although he vowed and declared to himself, when alone, that after having left Freiburg he would think of her no more, these assurances would not hold good in her presence. Then flashed from his eyes looks that told volumes, and sentences begun and abruptly interrupted again, by himself, enlightened her mind as to the state of his heart; but by no word, by no sign whatever, did she give him reason to believe that he was understood, and how *she* felt towards him. Kind and civil—that she was seemingly glad to see him—was the only conclusion he could draw from her deportment towards him. His expressive, speaking looks re-

mained unanswered, save by a charming, pleasant smile. The pressure of his hand was never returned.

A month had gone by now, and still business kept Mr. Raymond at Freiburg, so he said; although others believed that some other attraction held him captive.

CHAPTER IX.

LISTENING TO REASON.

Edith and Maurice Raymond met almost daily, either at the gardens, or at other places in which the environs of Freiburg abound, and which the fashionable world of that city love to frequent. Almost unknown to herself, her heart had opened to his passionate looks and love-like words, and she waited for every meeting with joyful, beating heart. But when day after day passed without having brought more definite assurances of his love than those glances, so speaking in their ardor, and those sentences, uttered so tenderly and in such thrilling tones, yet, in reality, so insufficient and vague, she began to reflect, and her pride took alarm. She, in her truthfulness, had hitherto unquestioningly believed what she thought he meant to convey to her by his manner; giving her heart into his keeping more and more, at every new meeting, although careful and

ever on the watch to hide this precious secret from him, until he should tell her of his own love, and ask hers in return. Yet his departure could not be delayed much longer, for already two months had passed since that memorable excursion to the Titi Sea; and still Maurice Raymond had not come forward, as, after all that had happened, he ought to have done.

That very afternoon they were to meet again, and Edith resolved that first she would closely examine her own mind, and lay out for herself the course she should pursue in future. Accordingly she opened the doors of her heart, and brought forth from its recess the secret which, at the same time, delighted and tortured her. Unflinchingly, and regardless of the pain she inflicted upon herself, she saw that there must be some reason why Mr. Raymond, who, judging by all appearances, seemed to love her, and wished to kindle like feelings in her heart, still kept back. She reviewed all their past meetings, and what had occurred; lingered over many a word and look that had made her happy; and wondered at many a sentence that he had begun with eager, ex-

pectant looks, but as quickly interrupted, in evident confusion and reluctance. "Why had he not gone on?" she asked herself. It could not have been fear of being refused, for, although she had given him no encouragement—*that* could not have pleased him, and would have been unmaidenly—yet she had never repulsed him, and had always shown, by her manner, that his attentions were not disagreeable to her. "Her poverty—might this be the cause of his delaying? Had his love to grow still stronger, to overcome this obstacle? No," she concluded, after a short time, "not her poverty, but"—and her face flushed hotly, and her lips trembled—"her low parentage." She had now lived almost a year in the world, and had learned that high birth goes before wealth; that many a loving heart might be strong enough to overlook the want of riches in the beloved object, but that to overcome the old prejudices of birth, the mind must be lofty and the affections strong, indeed. *This*, she thought, might be the rock upon which Maurice Raymond's love would be shipwrecked. A deep sigh followed this conviction, and a tear trembled on her dark lashes, hiding the sadness expressed in

her eyes. Only momentary was this depression, for then her proud heart rose in rebellion, the tears were forced back, and an expression of scorn and resolution settled around her mouth. Should he thus prove himself unworthy of her affection—why mourn for a loss that, properly looked at, would be a gain? If he had loved her well enough only to wile away a few weeks while in her presence, forgetting her when far away, should she then give even one sorrowful thought to him, so undeserving? If birth was more to him than the devotion of an honest heart, why should he receive what he appreciated so little? No; let him have his own way, let him choose which he best preferred. One more trial she would give him, she said to herself, and hope clung eagerly to that last chance. She might have judged him wrongly and too hastily, therefore this counseling with herself should not conclusively settle all. She would abstain from seeing him for a few days; perhaps the want of her society might open his eyes as to the strength of his love, and when he would miss her, and had been deprived of her company for a little while, then, perhaps, he would

become aware how dear she had become to him. So, in the afternoon, when Mrs. Wolden told them to get ready, Edith sent her love to the family of General Potter, but said that she preferred to stay at home.

"You are not ill, dear?" asked the lady.

"No; quite well; but I intend to devote this afternoon to my studies," was her quiet reply.

Maurice Raymond had also taken counsel with himself, previous to his expected meeting with Edith that afternoon. He had not denied to himself that he loved her, that her great attractions had chained him to her, and that he would never find another who could inspire the same feelings in his breast. "Were she poor, only," he said to himself, "he would at once ask her to be his wife, but she was also lowly born," and he sighed, in his distress, and painfully forced from his mind the picture of the lovely being who had taken such an unfortunate hold upon his heart. He paced the room in sad perplexity, holding fast to reason, and to the thought what *they* at home would say, if he, of whom so much was expected, should make such a mesalliance.

Strengthened thus, he went to meet her, to yield, as he knew he would, to her charms, but to be watchful of every look that he gave, of every word he uttered, so as not to commit himself. As he neared the table at which Mr. Wolden's family sat, he noticed, with astonishment, that Edith was not among them. With a vague fear he inquired whether Miss Adlaw was sick, and being answered in the negative, and told that she had preferred to devote this afternoon to her studies, his heart throbbed, and a feeling of great mortification made his features cloud, and his lips close tightly underneath his moustache. He was not sure that she loved him, but was she, indeed, so indifferent, that studying or meeting him was all the same to her? It was evident that she preferred the former.

The afternoon passed, for him, very slowly, and he said good-bye to the company at an early hour, giving business as a reason for departing so soon.

The following day, when making Fenster Parade (window parade), she was not there, neither on the next one, nor did she accompany Herr Wolden to St. Otilien, where it had been arranged that the

two families next should meet. He felt entirely out of spirits, and the question rose within his mind, "how should he feel when he had left Freiburg for good? Would this constant yearning for her society be stilled when far away, or should he, indeed, have to give way to the wishes of his heart, and try to win Edith, in earnest, for his wife?" These thoughts made him thoroughly miserable, and, with a delight, such as he had never experienced before, he perceived her sitting among the others at their next meeting. His eyes sparkled, and his face flushed with joy, as he went to greet her.

"We have not met for a long time—a long time for me, at least."

"With difficulty she suppressed a smile of joy, but managed to say, quietly, "only five days, Mr. Raymond."

"I even did not see you, when I passed your house."

"At what time was that?" she asked—the little hypocrite—for well she knew that two o'clock was the hour when he passed the window, whenever he knew that he was not to meet her that day.

"You know, Miss Adlaw," he said, with a reproachful look, "at the usual hour."

Without giving a direct answer to this, she said, "I have to be very industrious, for only one month more, and I shall leave Freiburg."

"I shall leave it to-morrow;" he had no opportunity of watching the effect these words had upon her, for, as he spoke, her dress was caught by a branch, and when she had freed herself, her face was calm and her voice even, as she said, "your friends will miss you."

"Will *you* miss me, Miss Adlaw?" Where were his intentions to be careful, and not to commit himself?

"Will I miss the preserver of my life?" she asked, in return, looking thoughtfully into his eyes.

"Not as *that* alone, should I wish to be remembered by *you*," he spoke almost passionately, "but," he stopped abruptly, and turning away his head for a moment, concluded, "as a dear friend."

This hesitation and evident caution, for he was on his guard, recalled to Edith all her suspicions, and the softness that had shone from her face but an in-

stant before vanished, making room for a stern, proud expression. Ignoring his last question altogether, she asked, calmly, "do you go straight home from here?"

"Yes; direct."

A restraint had come between them. A chilling coldness settled upon her heart, and she could find no words to keep up the conversation. He fought and wrestled with the stern necessity, as he called it, longing to close her into his arms, and to hold her to his heart; one moment longer, perhaps, and Love would have conquered Reason; but just then Charles Potter, with Miss Wolden by his side, came up to them, and the spell was broken.

"We lose you to-morrow, Mr. Raymond? so Mr. Potter informs me."

"Yes; two days more, and my visit in Freiburg will belong to the past."

"We shall miss you."

"Thank you, for saying so."

It was over then, and he had gone. One parting call he made at Mr. Wolden's residence, which, of course, lasted only a few moments. His preju-

dices were stronger than his love, and that was the stumbling block in his way to happiness.

Edith devoted one evening to giving way to her sorrow, but from that time she determined to bestow no serious thought upon one who deserved so little.

CHAPTER X.

FATHER AND SON.

Maurice Raymond returned home, and had to answer many a curious question, and listen to many a speculating remark about his unaccountably long stay from home "on business." That he had spent such a long time in Freiburg, he never confessed. He had put miles between himself and Edith, but had, as yet, experienced none of the peace and ease of mind he had hoped to derive from this distance. On the contrary, his wish to see her again grew with every new day, and an uncomfortable restlessness took possession of him. Business did not interest him as it formerly had, and the pleasures and amusements he used to enjoy with his friends had lost their charms. His father became aware that his son was not the same as when he had left them, and noticed his growing low spirits, at first with concern; soon,

however, he came to the conclusion that Maurice might have met with his destiny, which would explain his long absence. His son, he knew, looked upon him more as a friend than as a parent, and had, hitherto, always brought his troubles and difficulties to him; therefore he doubted not that, in this case, he would do the same. It seemed, though, that Maurice now meant to keep his own counsel, and would not take his father into his confidence. Mr. Raymond felt sorry, especially when, after two weeks had passed, his son became more and more depressed. One morning, when William was absent, and the father with his younger son sat alone in the office, Mr. Raymond said, "Maurice, is there any cause for your despondency, and will you not trust me, as you have always done? Have I not been a true friend to you, my son, as well as a kind parent? Sometimes talking over one's trouble eases it, and two heads are often wiser than one." He waited awhile for an answer, but as none came, and he only saw his son's face blush painfully, he continued, "You know that it is not mere curiosity that makes me wish to know your trouble, and that I do not want to

pry into your affairs, but, perhaps I might be able to advise you. Shall I guess?" he added, with a smile, and coming nearer to Maurice; "and if I am right, will you tell me so?"

His son smiled, and thus encouraged, Mr. Raymond asked, "Is it a matter of the heart?"

"It is," answered Maurice, shortly, leaving his seat abruptly.

"Should this, then, affect you in this manner, my son? That is, if you are successful, as I hope you are. Have you already committed yourself?"

"No; not in the manner you mean; but, Father, there are ifs and buts in the matter, that make it impossible for me to ask her to be my wife," he cried, at last, almost angry at being forced to speak of his trouble.

"Ah! this alters the case. May I hear of them? She is beautiful, I suppose?"

"Too much so for my peace of mind."

"Of course. I thought so. Accomplished?"

"Highly so."

Mr. Raymond saw that he had to worm his whole secret out of him, therefore he went on to inquire,

composedly, and not at all disturbed by his son's short answers—

“Rich?”

“Poor!”

A low whistle, and, “This is bad,” was Mr. Raymond's comment.

To this Maurice turned around, almost savagely, and said, quickly, “This ought to be no obstacle to *me*, Father, for *we* are rich.”

“*I*, you mean, Maurice.”

“I beg your pardon, Father; *you*,” and a bitter smile played around his lips.

“You must not misunderstand me, Maurice,” said Mr. Raymond gently, laying his hand kindly upon his son's arm. “If you were my only child, you might safely say ‘*we*,’ but I have six children. I am rich, but divide the whole bulk into six parts, and although some might still call you rich, you would not think yourself so. This is what I meant by correcting you, and, Maurice, it would be well if you would remember this in the choice of a wife. Do you now understand me?”

“I do, Father, and beg your pardon; but I am”—

"Never mind, my son, I know all that you would say. There seems to be yet another reason why you should not marry the girl you love. Her parentage—is it that?"

"She is lowly born, though she bears an unblemished name," he answered, reluctantly.

"Then you are right, indeed. This settles the question, and you must try to forget her."

"I shall never love another as I love her," said Maurice, greatly irritated at hearing repeated by another what he had said to himself so often.

To this outburst Mr. Raymond thought it best not to answer, and taking a cigar from the table, he lighted it complacently, settling himself comfortably into a chair. "What?" he thought to himself, "Maurice, young and handsome, with the fairest prospects in life, spoil his whole future by making a mesalliance? He, who might choose any where. Absurd! Impossible! It is quite a different thing with me. I have passed the meridian of life, am wealthy, my position in society is secure, and if I wish to indulge a little in romance, and take home a wife whose parents had been poor and of

low station, I may risk it. It might be called the eccentricity of an old man, nothing more. But my son would not be judged thus leniently. Society would forever look down upon his wife, and both would, consequently, be miserable. Her want of money might be overlooked, but the other—no. I pity him *now*, from my heart, but should pity him a thousand times more if he were to commit such a folly.”

“My son,” he said, aloud, “you know my opinion, but this is all. I only give you my advice; it remains with you to act upon it or not. You know the consequences of such an imprudent step, as well as I do. You might force your friends to acknowledge her, but she would never be happy. If you love her truly you should, for *her* sake, abstain from your desire. You are too young to commit such a folly. Our opinions change with the increase of years; our experiences in the world teach us to judge differently, and to look upon things in a different light as life advances; therefore a few years hence you will congratulate yourself for having *now* listened to the voice of prudence.”

CHAPTER XI.

EDITH AT HOME.

When Mrs. Adlaw saw Edith again, she almost dropped a courtesey before the beautiful lady, who embraced her so lovingly. "Grandmother, dear Grandmother, how glad I am to see your dear old face again!" and her arms clung anew around the delighted dame.

"I am afraid, Edith, you will now grow dissatisfied with your quiet country home, since you have lived so long with grand folks."

"Never fear," Edith replied, with a smile; "If you only knew how often I have longed to be with you, and to see dear, kind Mr. Sulgar. How is he?"

"Quite well, when I saw him last. He expects you, with impatience. He told me that he would receive us at the depot at L."

“Kind and thoughtful as ever;” Edith spoke softly to herself. “True, faithful friend, who neither thinks of where I spring from, nor that I am poor;” and her eyes looked into the distance, and her thoughts were at L., picturing to herself her arrival there, and her friend’s warm greeting. One more day, and she would see him and ask him for the equivalent he had hinted at. Already she heard him cry out, “welcome home, ‘little one,’” his features lit up by joyful smiles.

A few minutes more and the train would halt; already it was puffing slowly into the depot. Mr. Raymond paced the platform with feverish excitement. There was Mrs. Adlaw coming out, and her granddaughter followed. He stepped up, helping the old lady to descend, and turning to give the same assistance to Edith, confronted a lady of unsurpassed loveliness.

“O, Sir! how truly considerate, to receive us,” she exclaimed, stretching out her hand to him in glad welcome.

He took it, as if in a dream, bowing lowly, and saying, “welcome home, Miss Adlaw.”

A shade of deep disappointment crossed Edith's features at this ceremonious greeting, and in silence she entered the carriage.

Arrived at home, she hurried at once to her own little room, that had been kept exactly as she had left it, and throwing herself upon her bed, murmured, while tears rolled slowly down her cheeks, "he, too, has changed." After a lapse of, perhaps, an hour, she went down into the garden. Her grandmother was busy in the kitchen, and *he* was sitting alone upon the bench where they used to have their lessons together. He looked up when she came out, and noticing her sad expression, said, "you regret those you have left behind?"

"No, Sir; not that; but," and her lip quivered slightly, and her voice was very mournful.

"But what, 'little one?'" Involuntarily this expression escaped his lips.

In an instant her features had undergone a change, joy shone from her eyes, and with almost childish gladness she cried, "*that* Sir—*that* is what I regretted;" and seeing him look at her a little perplexed, she explained: "When my grandmother met

me she almost dropped a courtesey, and that gave me a pang, Sir; and when *you* received me with a 'welcome, Miss Adlaw'—that, Sir, that—"

"What, 'little one?' " he asked, tenderly.

"It pained me. I had thought you would be so glad to see me." He imagined there were tears in her eyes, her voice was so low and sad.

"Could you doubt, for one instant, that I should be otherwise than happy to have you back?"

"I do not now, Sir, and I am happy again. And now, Sir, the equivalent?"

Mr. Raymond looked long and earnestly at her, and then said, "not yet, Edith; wait a little longer."

"Will you give me a reason *why* not now, Sir? You know you promised me that I should know when I came back from school."

"I shall keep my promise, fear not; but I could not tell you at present, nor can I tell you the reason for not wishing to do so." Then turning the subject quickly, he said, "do you regret that you had to leave your friends?"

"As much as every one regrets to leave one's friends; not more." A frank look, and a coun-

tenance that did not change, accompanied these words.

“You know, ‘little one,’ I am a jealous friend, and would wish to be, after your grandmother, the first in your affections,” and he watched eagerly every feature of her face.

She smiled, pleased, and replied, “of that you may be sure, for as I told a gentleman I became acquainted with at Freiburg, *you* must always have my first affections.”

“And”—it cost him much to steady his voice, and make this question appear as a pleasantry—“did that gentleman not try to supplant me?”

A burning blush dyed Edith's countenance, and made ~~the~~ blood tingle in her ears, but she answered bravely, looking almost defiantly into his eyes, “he did, Sir.” Her lips closed sternly, and her foot tapped the ground in angry excitement.

“But, did he succeed?” and his voice sounded unnatural, with the effort to suppress his anxiety.

“Sir!” and like a goaded deer, her eyes shooting sparks of angry fire, her mouth firmly set, and her breast heaving with anger, she turned upon him.

"I beg your pardon." His voice was cold and distant. He rose.

She was by his side in an instant. "Oh, Sir," she pleaded, with almost childlike simplicity, "you did not mean it. You could not know; but, Sir—your question—my pride could not bear it, as yet!"

"And do you love him still, Edith?"

"Love him?" and indescribable scorn curled her lips. "He saved me from danger; how, I shall tell you afterwards. Thus he first won my gratitude, then he tried to win my heart. With his handsome person, his attractive manners, his loving looks and meaning words, it was not so very difficult to make me believe what I thought he intended me to believe. I am convinced that he loved me, although he never told me so plainly. I told him, from the first, that I was not high-born, nor rich, and still he persisted in his attentions, which could have meant only one thing. All at once, like the coward that he is, he broke off, caring not for the mischief that he might have done. This is all. Do you think, Sir, that I could love one whom I must

despise—a coward? O, no; that feeling belongs to the past; it does not trouble me any longer.”

“Why, then, your evident pain, almost agony, at my question?”

“Because, Sir, it always will remain an unpleasant remembrance, and, besides, though my *heart* may have overcome the shock, my pride still bleeds at the least touch. It is galling and mortifying to find that one is not loved for one’s self. And, therefore, Sir, you could not have touched a sorer point than this.”

Mr. Raymond saw, and was convinced, that she really felt as she said, and he knew that he might hope to gain the victory at last. Therefore he gave her his arm with a light heart, and begging her to sing his favorite air for him, they entered the little room.

“What!” she cried, in delight, “a new piano? And from you, Sir, I know,” she added, deeply affected. “Sir! Sir! can I really repay you for all your goodness?”

“You can, Edith. Shall I tell you how?” As he saw her listen with breathless attention, he continued, “become my own dear wife. That I love you with

all my heart you cannot doubt; give me your love in return, and you will have fulfilled my most cherished wish. I saw you, and loved you. As you were then I could not ask you to be mine, for I am rich, and you would have felt unhappy among my friends; I thought not of myself, only, but also of your happiness, not wishing to take you *then* to my heart. I ran the risk that in Freiburg you might meet a heart to which yours would respond, but I put my selfish thoughts to rest by telling myself that this was your right. I am old, and should have wronged you had I denied you the opportunity to see something of the world, and judge for yourself. You have come back. Your heart is free, as you assure me. You can hold your own now, in any society, and I ask you, will you try to love me, or will it be too difficult a task? I wish your love of your own free will; let no other consideration, whatever, guide you in this matter, for if you should, we both would be unutterably miserable. I go now, 'little one,' to return in a week. Think well over it; I ask only for your love, freely given, as I give you mine."

She was alone. Alone with her thoughts. Uncon-

sciously she reached her room, and sat there until her grandmother called her. Even then she could not realize that Mr. Raymond had, indeed, told her that he loved her, and asked her to be his wife

CHAPTER XII.

AT LAST.

“Did you know of Mr. Sulgar’s intentions, in regard to myself, Grandmother?” asked Edith, next morning, as she cleared away the breakfast.

“I did, and approved of them, seeing that he is an honorable man, and devotedly attached to you. When I die, you will be all alone in the world, young and inexperienced. He will be a loving friend to you always, and I advise you, my dear child, earnestly to consider what I now tell you. Do not accept his offer, unless you are convinced that you can truly love him, for that would most cruelly wrong him. Do not, for one moment, think that you would repay his great kindness by consenting to his dearest wish, unless your whole heart goes with it. You would make him unutterably unhappy should he afterward find out that, by marrying him, you only wished to pay off a debt. Had he behaved in a

less unselfish manner, then I might consider your future alone, and advise you to accept his proposal at once, knowing that you would be well cared for; but as it is, *he* must be considered also, and I do not wish that his goodness should be rewarded by turning his future life into bitterness. You have now lived long enough in the world to answer these questions: Are there many gentlemen, of wealth and position, who would have acted as he has done? How many would have forgotten your birth and your poverty, your ignorance, and want of manners? Many, perhaps, might have admired you, but gone no further. To be sure, he is not young any longer, but where the affections are concerned years are not counted, and love acknowledges no age. I have never thought you one of those flighty, silly girls, who act without thought, and imagine every thing gold where they see a glitter. Do not disappoint me now. This is all I have to say upon the subject; all else I leave to you. I thought it my duty to put the chief points in this matter before you, but it is left to you to decide."

The heavy responsibility of the matter, as well as

the sudden revelation of her friend's true feelings towards her, had, in a measure, benumbed Edith's judgment, and therefore she thought it the wisest plan to put the subject from her mind as much as she could, for a few days, at least, and then, when she should be able to reason more clearly and in cooler blood, to give the whole a fair trial, and careful consideration. She had, at the same time, a dim conviction that the more or less yearning of her heart after his company, as the days would go by, might prove about the surest compass to indicate towards which direction her feelings pointed.

The first day she devoted herself, entirely, to fixing up the cottage with the little fancy articles she had brought with her, mostly parting gifts from her friends, and in going about the field with her Grandmother. The second day, she remembered that her kind friend had once remarked that white curtains gave an attractive, neat look to a cottage, and that his eyes always liked to linger at a place through whose green foliage the white-curtained windows peeped. Accordingly, she searched among her clothes for an old, white muslin dress, that she had

laid by, and the whole day was spent in hemming and stitching the cloudy drapery, and when the evening came, and the windows were shrouded in the smoothly-ironed muslin, she went out upon the road to notice the effect, smiling to herself in childish glee, and fancying how *he* would like it the next time he came. The third day, she thought that as she had not sung his favorite air for him the day he was last here, and when he had asked her to do so—and she blushed, and a feeling akin to joy shot through her heart, as she remembered *what else* he had requested of her—she might as well do so to-day, that she might learn to sing it the way he liked it best; and she went to the piano, and sang it so often and patiently, that her grandmother wondered, what in the world might be the reason that the child *would* continue to sing that old song, in which *she*, at least, could not discover so much beauty? The fourth day she was chiefly occupied in her room, sitting, lost in idle dreaming, rehearsing the words he had spoken on that evening—there was only one evening for her now—smiling happy smiles, as she repeated some fond expressions, and wondering what

he was doing now, and whether he also was thinking of *her*? The fifth day seemed inexpressibly long; she wished the week had passed, and her kind friend would come. The sixth was one of great inward excitement. He would be here to-morrow, she said to herself, a hundred times. He would tell her again how dear she was to him, and she—and a beautiful blush mantled her brow, and she covered her face with her hands.

The seventh, it was like a holy day to her.

“Do you think, Grandmother, he will come in the morning, or in the afternoon?” and her voice trembled, her cheeks glowed, and in her eyes burned a fire that betrayed the inward struggle to appear composed.

“It is likely that he will be here at his usual time, in the afternoon,” replied Mrs. Adlaw, quietly, feeling by no means calm, for she was ignorant which way her grandchild would decide.

“Do you not think he might come sooner, to-day? You know, Grandmother—*to-day*!”

“He might, my dear; but, still, we can do nothing but wait.”

Edith suppressed a sigh.

Five o'clock; he had not yet arrived. Edith was leaning against the fence, looking anxiously up the road.

Six o'clock; still alone, watching for him. A deep sadness had stolen over her face, and her gaze tried to pierce the falling darkness. Night; and he had not come.

Mrs. Adlaw also was disappointed, but tried to hide it; telling Edith that a business man is not always master of his time, and that, very likely, he had been prevented by some urgent cause. When Mrs. Adlaw, that evening, bade good-night to her grandchild, and saw the countenance, from which all light had gone out, she rejoiced within herself, for she now knew the answer Mr. Raymond would get.

The eighth day passed in useless waiting, and Edith threw herself, sobbing, upon her bed that night, murmuring, "he, too, has left me. He has repented; and I love him so fondly."

The tenth day, as Edith was sitting on the bench, depressed and dispirited, she heard her name pro-

nounced, and raising her eyes quickly, she saw him standing before her. Had her life depended upon it, she could not have spoken then. She felt choking with various emotions, but, at last, she managed to say, almost inaudibly, and with a sad and trembling voice, "O, Sir! you have come at last."

"Too soon, I fear, to hear what I dread to hear," he replied, deceived by her quiet bearing.

"I counted every hour of each day, Sir," she went on, in the same low tone, "and rejoiced at every day that had passed, for it brought your coming nearer; but when the seventh and eighth days had gone, and the ninth went by without bringing you, I believed that you had reconsidered, and repented. O, Sir!" and her lips began to quiver, and her eyes to fill, and her voice grew husky with pain, "why did you not leave me alone when I was happy? Why had this cruel blow to come from *you—from you?*"

Mr. Raymond listened with breath suspended; but when she had finished, with her hand pressed tightly to her heart, as if to still some pain, he went quickly up to her. "Repented, 'Sweetheart?' Of what should I repent? Of nothing, but that I could

not come at the time I had promised. Then you have waited for me, darling, and remembered me and my words?"

"Waited for you? Aye—longed for your coming. Remembered you, Sir?" and a brilliant smile lit up her features; "I have remembered nothing, but that you were not with me. I have repeated your words and treasured them, until I believed them to have been *only* words—expressions you had repented of. Then, Sir, I was unhappy—very unhappy!"

"But if I repeat what I have told you before, that I love you, and that you are all to me, and if I ask again, will you be my own dear wife, then what answer would I receive?"

She raised her eyes, for an instant, to his, then dropping them quickly, said, "you know my answer now."

"Do you love me truly, Edith? Does nothing but your heart prompt you to speak thus?"

She looked up at once. "Do you think, Sir, I would reward your love with a lie?"

"My own, my 'Sweetheart,' at last!" he exclaimed, with a voice tremulous with deep emotion, and press-

ing her to his heart, said, fondly, "my *own* 'little one,' now."

"Why did you not come, Sir, on the day you promised?"

"Because, just when on the point of starting, I received a telegram, so urgent that I had to go home at once. I did it reluctantly; still there was no help for it; I had to go. In one respect, I was glad to let you have a few more days to consider, for I wished you to think well before you should decide. Besides, I dared not hope that you wished me back so fondly."

"You are with me now, and all is forgotten; all but that you love me."

"Edith, do not call me 'Sir' any longer; call me"—

"It is the name," she interrupted him, "by which you have grown dear to me; you will be 'Sir,' to me, always; no other name could I pronounce so fondly."

"Then have your wish, 'little one,' and let me be your 'Sir.'"

CHAPTER XIII.

A SHOCK.

Day after day now passed in perfect happiness. Joys hitherto unknown to Edith brightened her heart, and feelings strangers until now beautified everything around her. Her betrothed became dearer to her with every meeting, and her love for him grew to be the all-absorbing passion of her heart. To see him, to be with him, was her only pleasure, and the regret she felt at every parting was only stifled by the thought that the next day would again bring him to her side.

He was only too glad that it should be so. Instead, as had been his wont formerly, of spending the afternoon with her, he came now in the morning, remaining until sunset. The flush of joy that dyed her cheek when she greeted him, and the sparkling eyes that told him that her heart was wishing for his coming, were dearer to him than gold and jewels,

and the tender love that shone from those truthful orbs assured him that she was all his own. When they walked together under the shade of the trees, she gathered flowers to form into a bouquet for him to take home, that he might have something to remind him of her until the morrow; how sweet and clinging, how loving and childlike all her movements; no wish, save to please him, no thought, but to show how dear he was to her.

Two weeks had passed thus, and the time had come for Mr. Raymond to return home. Although she knew that this time had to come, deep sadness filled her heart when he told her so.

"You will come back again soon?" she asked, imploringly, while large tears gathered slowly in her eyes.

"You know, 'little one,' that nothing but necessity takes me from your side, and that I shall not remain away one hour longer than is actually necessary; and then, dearest, when I come back we must settle the day of our marriage. Not so?" he asked, as he saw her blush, but received no answer.

"So soon, Sir?" she asked, timidly.

“You forget, ‘Sweetheart,’” he said, fondly, “that I have waited longer than a year. I am no longer young, and every hour is a loss. Well, Edith, shall it not *then* be decided?”

“As you wish, Sir.”

“That is right, darling. Now let me bid good-bye to your grandmother, and then I must go. You must take great care of my treasure, Mrs. Adlaw,” he said to the old woman; “I shall be back in three weeks, at the latest. I shall send you books and music, Edith, before I leave L., to occupy your time with, while I am absent. Now, ‘little one,’ will you walk with me to the road, so that we may be a little longer together?”

They had reached the end of the path, and Edith held fast to his arm, as if she believed that would keep him from leaving her, when Mr. Raymond said, let us sit down together upon this stone, I have to tell you something which your grandmother and myself have kept from you until now. “My name, Edith,” and he looked earnestly into her eyes, “is not Sulgar.”

“Why”—she interrupted him quickly, and with a

pained voice—"why, Sir, have you deceived me? An untruth, Sir—an untruth, and from you!" and the tears rolled slowly down her suddenly blanched cheeks, and her hand loosened its hold on his arm.

How this one little act smote him. He felt as if he had received a blow. "You put too much importance upon it, 'little one,'" he said, almost entreatingly, "and, if you remember, I never told you that Sulgar was my name. You asked me under which name you should remember me, and I told you, 'Sulgar.' Do you recollect, Edith?"

"I do, Sir;" but still her voice was sad, and she kept her looks averted from his face.

"This is nothing serious, my darling, after all," he said, coaxingly, trying to turn her face towards him. "What does a name matter? Our reason was, at that time, a good one; ask your grandmother for an explanation. We thought it best; what harm has it done?"

"None, that I know of, Sir, only—only it was not quite the truth, and that is—that makes me fear for the consequences. However, I will try to believe

that you were right," she added, forcing herself to appear convinced. "But what is your name?"

"Maurice Raymond," he said, smilingly. "How do you like it?"

No answer came from those lips, which grew white as snow. No smile, responded to his, from those eyes, growing larger and darker every instant. At last she got up, slowly, and, as if unconscious, repeated with agitated voice, "Maurice Raymond?" Then looking at him long and sadly, murmuring, "it was an untruth," she broke into a flood of tears, followed by sobs that shook her whole frame, and startled him nearly into madness.

"Edith, my dearest child, you take this too seriously," he cried. "Believe me, my own, dear darling. Let me tell you all; or let us go back, and you may ask your grandmother."

"You misunderstand me, Sir. I believe all that you say. *Why* have you done this?" she wailed out.

"There must be some other reason for your unaccountable manner. Tell me, dearest, and let me explain away your trouble."

"Let us part now, Sir," she said, quietly; "I must be alone."

"I must bring you home, 'little one;' I cannot part from you thus."

"No, Sir; I must go home alone; and you will write soon?"

"You may be sure of that, dearest. Do you feel better now? Shall I not go home with you, darling?" and he took her face between his hands, looking long and fondly into her eyes. "Do you love me truly, and from your heart?"

A sad smile parted her lips, while she said, "O, Sir! I love you only *too* well. I love no one but you." Throwing her arms passionately around his neck, she quickly left him.

Her future, only a little while ago so bright, and clad in such radiant colors, had suddenly been robbed of its sunshine and smiling promise. The horizon of her happiness, so clear and cloudless in its outlines, was now overcast with darkness, that threatened to fold her in its dense and awful shadows. Quickly she went her way back to the house, large, hot tears rolling silently down her blanched cheeks,

her hands clasped tightly before her, a still despair settled upon her features, and the stern expression around her mouth more distinctly visible than ever. Now and then a deep sigh heaved her breast, and, at last, she murmured, angrily, between her tightly closed teeth, "why must *he* come between me and happiness? Was it not sufficient that he let me feel that he considered me his inferior, by playing with my feelings, and then throwing me off? Must he also take from me my only joy, my only treasure? Separate me from the heart that loves me so well and faithfully?" and she clenched her hand, and angry sparks flashed from her eyes.

Arrived at home, she bid her grandmother a hasty good-night, and hurried to her room. There she sat long, lost in thought, as was visible by the varying expression of her countenance; she was fighting a hard battle within herself, and when it was over, and the resolve taken, she said, in a sad, yet resolute tone, to herself, "yes; I must do it; it is the right way for me to pursue, though my heart bleed, and every fibre of my body cry out against it. I must follow *that* path, for it is the right one. What will he think of

me? Will he think me fickle and inconstant?" Her features began to work convulsively, and tear after tear coursed down her cheeks. "O, it is hard—very hard!" she cried, giving way to her trouble, and sobbing aloud and passionately. "But," she resumed, after she became quieter, "can I allow him to marry me, that his son may mock at him afterwards, and point to me, and say, 'she was good enough for you, Father; you have passed the bloom of youth; but I, young, with the whole world yet before me, I thought her beneath me.' Shall I be the cause, that my good, noble, generous friend might thus be spoken of? No; a thousand times no! It is for me to draw back; for me to save him from such humiliation. There is yet another reason, why I must act thus. Did he not tell me once that he is a jealous friend, a most exacting master? Might not, then—if his son should hint that he had met me before—my friend conclude that, perhaps, *that* was the man whom I had once loved; and might not suspicion awake, and whisper to him, 'she loves him still?' Might he not then, thus guided, misjudge me, and every look and act of mine, until wretchedness would settle

among us, and misery and unhappiness dwell in our house and hearts?" She shuddered, when she thought of the sad consequences this marriage might bring in its train, for him even more than for herself, for he would think himself wronged by two who were dear to him—by his child, and by his wife. "No, no!" she cried, with a voice full of horror, "it must not be; it cannot be! To save him from misery I must give him up, while it is yet time! I will wait his coming, and, face to face, will I tell him that I can never—*never* be his wife. At the same time, I will beg of him to believe that *he* only is in this heart, and that none other ever shall replace him, who is so good and noble. He must believe me, and even if I cannot tell him the reason of my resolution, he will believe that it is not fickleness nor want of love that induces me to act thus."

Had Edith known more of the light in which the two—father and son—stood to each other; that they were not mere relations, but also friends, good, well-meaning friends, she would have known that in no way need she have feared for Mr. Raymond, and that his father's happiness was as dear to his son as it was

to herself. But she knew nothing of this. She judged Maurice Raymond even more severely than he deserved, for she had learned to know him from his weakest side, and he had offended and hurt her at her most sensitive point—her pride. Had she loved him fondly, as she now loved his father, she might have found it easier to forgive him. This forgiveness might have been mingled with sorrowful regret at his rejecting her true devotion, but she would have felt neither bitterness nor resentment, as she did now, at the thought of him.

With heavy eyes and languid step, Edith made her appearance the next morning, and Mrs. Adlaw wondered at the deep sorrow that she seemed to suffer from her intended's absence; but she abstained from making any remark. But after two days had passed, and Edith's despondency seemed to increase, she thought some well-meant reproof might be of advantage, and therefore she said, "My child, when I saw you sad and downcast the first day after Mr. Raymond's departure, I thought it only natural, but when I see you growing more and more dispirited, I think it my duty to tell you that this is not only quite unnatural,

but even selfish. Had your intended died, you could not show more mournfulness ; and if he had jilted you your grief could not be deeper. Instead of this, he has only left you for a short space of time, promising to return in the shortest time possible. Therefore, I must consider your sorrow very unreasonable, and even inconsiderate to myself."

"Dear Grandmother," said Edith, sadly, putting her arms fondly around the old woman's neck, "forgive me for thus giving way to my grief. You are wrong, however, if you think that Mr. Raymond's going away has created all this sorrow ; although, to a certain degree, I felt his leaving me deeply, yet I assuredly should not have persevered in my sadness thus long had I not other cause for sorrow and despondency."

"My child, what has happened?" inquired Mrs. Adlaw, anxiously. "You had no difference with Mr. Raymond before his departure?"

"We had not. He told me that his name was not Sulgar, but Maurice Raymond, and that you and he had agreed that it might be best, at the time, not to tell me his real name. It shocked me at first—I will not

conceal it—to learn that I had been deceived, even in such a slight matter, by the persons I trust most in this world, and because I believe that an untruth, ever so plausible, somehow always has misfortune in its train. But this would have been only a passing mortification, for I am persuaded that you meant it for the best, had not something else—something of which neither you nor he know any thing—come between me and him; something, Grandmother, that must make our union impossible.”

“Child, child, do not speak thus!” cried the old woman, now really alarmed. “You must explain, and everything will be satisfactorily arranged. Some fancy of yours; girls are so unreasonable sometimes; really, I do not think that Mr. Raymond deserves that you should treat him with such fickleness.”

“O, Grandmother, Grandmother! you, too! you, too!” Edith exclaimed, laying her head upon her arm and sobbing bitterly.

“What else should he fancy? To-day you tell him of your unwavering affection, and seem happy only in his presence; to-morrow he leaves you, with words of endearment, and you declare that you cannot

marry him. Unless you have sufficient reason to give for your extraordinary behavior, I must confess that neither he nor I can judge otherwise, but that either you have lost your senses, or that you are fickle."

Moans and sobs were Edith's only answer.

"You have not told him so yet?"

"Not yet; I shall wait until he returns."

"Goodness gracious, child, you cannot be serious! Your reasons—give me your reasons!" almost shrieked the agitated woman.

"I shall give none." And her head was lifted quickly; the tears dried in her eyes, and a determined expression set on the firm, full mouth. "I love him truly; love him with my whole heart;" and her voice trembled slightly, and by force she kept back the fast gathering drops; "but, nevertheless, *I must not marry him*. He may call me fickle," and she threw back her head, proudly, "or unreasonable, or ungrateful, or mad; it will make no difference; I shall bear that, too; it will add to my sorrow, but it will not alter my resolution."

Mrs. Adlaw now knew that nothing would change

Edith's resolve. She knew, by the pained sound of her voice, that it was not want of affection that had forced her to this resolution; also that her sufferings were great; but she also knew, by the haughty motion of her head, that, suffer as she may, wrong her as they might, judge her as they pleased, Edith would adhere to her resolve, and no power upon earth could turn her from what she evidently considered right. With a troubled look, she followed her, as she went from the room, and murmured sadly to herself, "And I have tried to make everything so well for her, and now some unlucky chance turns every thing wrong. Poor child, what will become of her? What can become of her? My days are numbered, and each new week may bring my summons. Poor, dear gentleman! his hopes destroyed, also; his happiness marred for ever!"

CHAPTER XIV.

ONLY A FRIEND.

The next day brought a parcel and a letter, books and music, with new assurances that she was constantly in his mind. Her tears flowed freely as she opened the packet, and conflicting emotions disturbed her.

“Can you be so cruel, Edith, as to put into action your purpose, when you see how constantly he thinks of pleasing you?”

“Do you think, Grandmother,” and her voice was very low and tremulous, “if my own love for him, and the knowledge of *his* great, constant love for me, cannot change my resolution, that *your* reproaches will? No, Grandmother; were my reason a childish one, based on a foolish caprice or idle whim, perhaps you might, by reasoning or lecturing, turn me from my resolve; but the cause I have for breaking my

engagement is not based upon such slight grounds. I tell you again, that it is more for his happiness that I shall act thus than for my own. I well know, Grandmother, that, by persevering in my intention, *I* shall suffer most, and you must not fancy that I surrender my chance of happiness without having well thought over all the consequences. I have not only to give up the man whom I esteem, honor, and love most upon earth, but also risk the chance that he will look henceforth with contempt upon me. This thought alone"—and her hands became interlaced in despair—"is so fearful to me that, if I dwell upon it, it almost induces me to abstain from my intention. My future life, to fill up the catalogue of my misery, will be wrapped in darkness, and all light will have faded from my path. You, Grandmother," and a loving caress accompanied her words, "will, sooner or later, leave me, also; yes, I have thought of this, too," she said, answering a look of Mrs. Adlaw; "and then, I shall be alone in this world—alone," she repeated, with a tired, weary look in her eyes. "All alone. No one to love me; no one to guide me; no one to sympathize with me in my

trouble." The fast falling tears hindered her from speaking more. She sat down by her grandmother, and the two women—incarnated youth and age—twined their arms around each other and mingled their tears. A long silence followed. At last Edith said, almost inaudibly, "Do you not pity me, Grandmother? Are you still angry with me?"

"My poor, poor darling; if you only would confide in me, perhaps I might advise you."

"Believe me, Grandmother, it is best that I should not do so; let us not speak of it any more." They clasped their hands in silence, and Mrs. Adlaw promised to refrain from further interference.

These were dreary days and weeks in which Edith waited Mr. Raymond's coming. A time in which her affections pleaded most powerfully with her sense of right and wrong. Yet, goaded almost to madness with the conflicting emotions in her breast, and brought nearly to despair by the tortures she endured, she still held to her belief that, suffer as she might, it was her duty to sacrifice her love, to say farewell to happiness, and remain true to the resolve she had made.

It was her habit to go every evening to the garden gate, from which she could overlook the path by which he had to come, and, whether she expected him or not, there remain until the sun had set.

She was waiting there one evening, thinking of him and the blow she would strike when next they should meet, wishing in her inmost heart that *that* day might be still further off, yet, at the same time, yearning to see him again. Suddenly she gave a start, and the blood rushed to her head; it flushed her cheeks until they burned and smarted; it raced into her temples and made them throb and pain; tingled in her ears, and coursed, as if wild waves were dashing to and fro. Her heart almost ceased its beating; her hands grew icy cold, and her knees seemed to give way beneath the weight of her body; for there, coming toward her, was Mr. Raymond. "What shall I say? How receive him?" she kept asking herself. He noticed her, and hurried his steps; and in sheer despair and agony of mind she laid down her head, and cried as if her heart were breaking.

"'Little one,' my 'Sweetheart,' waiting for me!" and he raised her head with loving tenderness.

"What, Edith!" he exclaimed, with consternation.

"No smiles, no loving words; only tears to welcome me?"

"O, Sir, why have you come?" And her tears flowed more profusely, as she witnessed the pained look that came into his eyes.

"Why have I come?" he repeated to himself, trying to believe he had not heard aright. "Surely, Edith, you—you do not mean what you say. My unexpected arrival may be thoughtless. I should have informed you of my coming. Let us go to the house, 'little one,'" he said, soothingly. "This surprise has been too much for you. Your grandmother, is she quite well?"

A sad smile parted her lips, and her eyes rested beseechingly on his. "Yes, Sir, she is well, but—let me speak to you here; let me unburden my mind now, before we go to the house."

"Must I not come in, 'little one?'" he asked. "Will you not open the gate for me?"

She stepped back, and he pressed her to his heart the next moment. "There, darling, lay your head here until you feel composed. Let me look in your

eyes as they smile the welcome your lips bestowed so grudgingly."

She complied with his request, but tear after tear rained down upon his hand, as it held her's in loving clasp. "For the last time, Sir, for the last time."

"Is there, indeed, a reason that makes you behave so strangely, Edith?" He drew back a little, to observe her face.

"There is, Sir—I—I must not marry you."

"Edith!" and his face contracted in displeasure; "such jokes do not become you."

A deep-drawn sigh escaped her, and she said, "this is no joking matter with me. Although my life will, henceforth, be blighted, I must repeat again, *'I must not marry you.'*"

He looked long and earnestly at her; then breaking into a harsh laugh, he cried, "this is admirably done; perfectly acted. We have considered it all over. We have become alive to the fact that we are beautiful, accomplished, and charming, and we have come to the conclusion that, if we are able to charm an old man, we might easily entrap a young one, who would place his heart and fortune at our feet.

Who can blame you, Edith," he continued, bitterly, "that after your eyes had opened on these facts, you mean to use your power, and turn out, like so many other ladies, heartless and fickle, a flirt and a coquette. What does it matter"—he went on, almost savagely, not perceiving how the color fled from her face, leaving it deadly pale; how her eyes opened in pained surprise, filling gradually with horror and despair; her hands raised in appeal, stretching out as if to ward off some fearful blow; and how they fell powerless at her side, and her head sunk, as if crushed, upon her breast—"whether that old doting fool of a lover feels pained by it, whether his hopes will be crushed, his joys receive their death-blow, his most cherished wishes be dashed to the ground! What is all this to the fine lady, after she had"—

"Stop!" interrupted an imperious, ringing voice, and Edith, with proudly raised head and flashing eyes, stood close before him. "Stop, Maurice Raymond, before you say more than I should be able to forgive. I have listened to you thus far—submissively, because you have a right to feel wronged; tremblingly, because I feared, when I made this de-

termination, that you might look with contempt upon me, hearing my resolve, yet not knowing the reasons for my changed conduct ; despairingly, for I saw my worst anticipations verified. But now I stand face to face with you, proudly, because I can look you in the eyes without blushing, and can truthfully tell you no such debasing thoughts ever entered my mind. Nothing but love—faithful, honest, and undying love for you—has filled my heart, and will so, to my last day. I forgive you, Sir,” she added, sadly, “for thus cruelly misjudging me. Your heart must be sore, and your feelings are deeply hurt. You are angry with me now ; have thoughts of contempt for me in your breast ; but I hope and beg that it will not always be so ; that at some future time, when your feelings are less ruffled, you will think of your ‘little one,’ ”—here her voice grew husky, and Mr. Raymond drew nearer to her side—“as you first knew her. Perhaps you will then believe that *she* also suffered—more than you, perhaps, for,” and her voice was still lower, “with you and your love, she loses all that makes life worth having—and that, perhaps, she might have had a good reason thus to act, which in-

volved your happiness, as well as hers. I had thought, as I pictured this scene to myself, that, may be, you might believe and judge me less harshly, and then, Sir—then ”—

“What then?” he cried, clasping her passionately to his heart. “What? Any thing, darling, only forgive me for my cruel, cruel words; but, dearest, I was beside myself with pain and grief.”

“Then I should have asked you,” she continued, “to remain my friend. O, Sir!” she cried, piteously, “if you are gone, and my dear old grandmother also leaves me, I shall be so quite alone.” She moaned out the last words as if her heart were breaking, and her eyes sought his with a look of such entire desolation, that he could say nothing, but repeat Mrs. Adlaw’s words, “‘my poor, poor child.’ If I must give up the hope of having you for my own dear wife, I promise you, solemnly, that I shall remain your faithful, loving friend, as hitherto. But, ‘little one,’ tell me your reasons, and let me hope, at least, that there might come a time when the cause which separates us now may be removed, and we may be happy.”

"I can hold out no such hope, Sir, for I do not believe they will ever cease to exist."

"Then, 'little one,' let us not speak any more about it, at present. We still belong to each other, and although I must not now take you home with me, let us be happy as we are."

Edith raised his hand to her lips, impressing passionate kisses upon it, murmuring, "most generous and noble friend."

Although Mr. Raymond tried to make light of the matter, his heart was heavy and sore within him. His love for her, however, was so great and unselfish, that, not to distress her still more, he assumed an almost gay and joyful demeanor, telling her that he would remain a whole week in L., and consequently that they would see each other daily. "You know, 'little one,' we only have to consider ourselves as engaged to each other for an uncertain length of time, and I do not see why we should not be contented this way, as well as if our wedding were to have been in a month."

She gazed at him with tears in her eyes, for his behavior did not, in the least, deceive her. She

judged him by herself, and knew that sorrow was in his heart, although his lips spoke consoling words, and his eyes smiled upon her. She felt almost adoration for the man who loved her so dearly that, for *her* peace sake, he was able to put back his trouble into the furthest recess of his heart, and show her only kindness and consideration.

Mrs. Adlaw rejoiced that this dreaded matter had taken such an unexpected turn. She had no particular wish to have Edith married, so long as she was able to protect her; and now, since their grief was reduced to uneasiness only, she did not mind so much to have her still longer with her, hoping that before her own death all might yet assume a more pleasant aspect, and that after that event, even if they should not marry, Mr. Raymond would continue to befriend her grandchild.

Thus the week passed in comparative happiness. Edith brightened up again, satisfied if he was with her. Only Mr. Raymond, when thinking himself unobserved, would grow thoughtful, and his features lose the expression of happiness that was wont to rest there. At parting, instead of taking her into his

arms, he only raised her hands fondly to his lips, answering her questioning looks with, "we remain friends, 'little one,' faithful friends."

"Thank you, Sir," she answered, almost humbly, "for thinking me worthy of it. You will come again?" she asked, eagerly, breathlessly awaiting his answer.

"You wish it, Edith?" he asked, gently.

"Sir!" she cried, in a grieved tone, "for mercy's sake, do not doubt me!"

"I shall come again, in a month."

CHAPTER XV.

A LEGACY.

Mr. Raymond had only once taken counsel with Mrs. Adlaw, in this matter, inquiring whether she had any suspicion as to the cause of her grandchild's altered conduct; but she could not enlighten him, knowing no more than he did. She told him of her conviction that Edith suffered dreadfully; but, nevertheless, she was persuaded that her grandchild would remain true to her determination. She had seen in Edith's eyes that which made her sure of her unwavering devotion for him, but she also had read *that* in her countenance which made her firmly believe that the child would never change her mind, until circumstances should arise to alter the aspect of things, making it appear right to her that she should recede from her purpose. Thus Mr. Raymond knew that he had, for the present, no more to hope for.

To Edith, he had never alluded to the subject nearest their hearts, except on the last day of his second visit; then he said, holding her hand, in parting, "that reason, Edith, will you not impart it to me?" But she had answered, with such an entreating look, "Why will you force me, Sir, to repeat what I know must pain you?" that he had only sighed, stroking her hand gently, as if to soothe her, and had asked, "will you promise me, that if this reason be removed, you then will, of your own free will, wherever you may be, let me know, and fulfill your promise, and become my own?"

"I promise, faithfully; but do not deceive yourself with false hopes, for I repeat that I do not believe it ever will be removed."

Edith noticed, with sorrow, at his last visit, that his hair was bleached more than before, and she thought she perceived in the sound of his voice, and in the expression of his features, a sadness that never before had been there, and her heart grew heavy, knowing that it was she who had brought it there.

In the first week of November he paid her another

visit. He told her then that they would not see each other for some time. Noticing her frightened expression, he said, assuringly, "do not misconstrue my words, 'little one;' Christmas is drawing near, and business requires me at home at this time. My family also demand my presence. I cannot be away from home at Christmas; had it been otherwise, we might have enjoyed that time together." He looked earnestly into her eyes, but receiving no answer, continued, "I long, as much as you, that we should be as often together as possible; but I have other ties, which have also to be considered. The first week after New Year's day, however, 'little one,' we shall see each other again."

Mr. Raymond was sitting, one morning, in his office, with his son, Maurice; both were over head and ears in business. The letters had been brought up, and Mr. Raymond was opening them, one by one. His son, who was working at the same desk with his father, on looking up, noticed, with surprise, his agitated features, and the trembling hand, in which he held an open letter.

"Bad news, Father?" he asked, concerned, "and where from?"

"I must leave town immediately," was the startling answer.

"*Now*, Father? This is unfortunate, for we are in the midst of business; besides, it is only one more week to Christmas. Is the case so very urgent?"

"Nothing more serious, my son, than death—the death of an esteemed friend of mine." Mr. Raymond had pronounced this with a voice so solemn that Maurice, awed by it, answered, "This alters the case. When do you go?"

"At once. The train leaves in half an hour. I do not think that I shall be back before Christmas. However, you must see to all, Maurice, and work for two."

"You may depend upon me, Father. Where do you go to?"

"To L."

Yes, Mrs. Adlaw was dying, and this was the news that disturbed Mr. Raymond in the midst of work. The letter that brought him this sad intelligence con-

tained only three words—without signature or name of place and time—“*Grandmother is dying.*”

When Mr. Raymond arrived he found Edith near the bed of the dying woman. She reached out her hand when he entered, whispering, “She is slumbering. She took sick a week ago, and the doctor says that in a day or so all will be over.” Covering her face with her hands, she wept, in silent agony.

The noise awoke the patient, and, opening her eyes and perceiving him, she said, while a glad smile lit up her sunken features, “You have come. I knew you would not fail us. Edith, at first, would not write, saying that she knew you could not leave home now, but I insisted.”

“You were right, Mrs. Adlaw; I should never have forgiven myself if Edith were alone in her sore trouble.”

“A few days more, Sir, and she will be all alone,” she said, with a sad, mournful look at her grandchild.

“She need not be,” he answered, with an expressive look toward Edith.

A redoubled burst of grief was her answer.

“I know what you wish to imply,” replied Mrs.

Adlaw to his meaning glance. "I have spoken to her about it, begged her to give either her reason, or her consent to unite herself to you, before I shall leave this world, but all to no avail. I leave it to you now; perhaps your persuasion may meet with more success."

"For mercy's sake," cried Edith, in appealing accents, "Tempt me not now—*not now*, Sir!" she exclaimed, almost beside herself with extreme distress. "It is ungenerous to urge me now—*now*, at such a time as this, when my heart is bursting with the thought of losing my dear grandmother; with the knowledge that in future I shall stand alone in the world, and—" and she pressed her hand tightly to her heart—"with the voice within me urging me to do what would be wrong, and bring misery upon both of us." Rising hastily, she left the room.

"We are cruel," said Mr. Raymond, after she had gone. "I shall say no more. She knows that I would gladly take her home, to shelter her from all harm, and she promised me to ask me to do so, as soon as she thought it right. I shall trust her, and say no more."

"We have no choice," sighed Mrs. Adlaw; "but let us not waste the short time that is left to me yet in this world on this matter, but let me consult with you about my grandchild's future. She has no home to go to. She cannot remain alone here. You are her only friend, but still you are, in a measure, insufficient, for after my death you ought not to see Edith again. You know, Sir," she added, as if to apologize, "people might talk about it."

"I understand you, and I know that you are correct. This must be my last visit; that is"—he hesitated, but she concluded, with a gentle smile—"until after my funeral. You may speak out without reserve, Sir, for the thought of death is not painful to me; it is a friend, whose appearance I have expected for many years—welcomed, I should say, if it were not for the thought of Edith. I never dreaded my departure from life, for I had wisely made the thought of it a pleasant one, by believing firmly that *there* I shall meet those who have gone before me, and knowing that *this* was only my temporary home. About this, my plan, I have spoken to Edith already, and she says that in every thing

she will accede to my wishes and yours; therefore, be pleased to listen to what I have to say. She has kept up a friendly correspondence with the family of Mr. Wolden. Might she not write to Mrs. Wolden, telling her of my death, and of the manner in which she is situated at present, mentioning, at the same time, that it is her wish to enter a family, either as governess or companion, and ask them whether they happen to know of a situation of this kind? If they have kind hearts, this might induce them to offer her a home until she should be able to obtain a situation."

Mr. Raymond groaned aloud, "My darling, my heart's treasure, thus to be pushed forth into the hard, cold world; and she so proud and sensitive; it is almost more than I can bear."

"Her very pride, Sir, will help her to get along. But what do you think about my proposal?"

"It is the only one, and therefore the best. I will look about for a suitable family for her. She must not, if they should invite her to their house, remain there too long, as Edith would feel it too deeply, thinking, in her pride, that she might be a burden to her friends."

"Then she must write at once ; I wish, if possible, to know the result of her letter."

Edith was called, and the letter written. Mr. Raymond deposited it in his pocket, and said, "As it has to be posted at once, I shall now take my leave, to return early to-morrow morning. You are not alone this night?" he inquired, before leaving the room.

"No, Sir," answered Edith; "a kind neighbor comes every evening, since my grandmother's sickness, to watch with me."

When the two women were alone again Mrs. Adlaw said, "Now, my child, this may be my last night, who knows, though I wish it not, for I am anxious for the answer from Freiburg. However, I must make use of every moment that is still granted to me to be with you. Therefore, I shall devote this hour, as we are all alone, to giving you my last legacy. I hope and pray that it may prove useful to you in the future. Take that key you see hanging above the door, and draw forth from underneath my bed the small trunk you see there."

Edith having complied with this request, Mrs.

Adlaw resumed: "Open the lid and slide your hand down to the bottom, on its right side."

"I have done so, Grandmother."

"Feel for a soft bundle, in the shape of a small cushion, and give it to me. Yes, this is the right one; now leave me, my child; let the door remain ajar, so that I can call you; stay—raise me into a sitting posture."

Edith obeyed her request, and then went out, leaving the door half open.

Alone, Mrs. Adlaw opened the white linen cloth, yellow from age, with trembling hands, and, examining every article the parcel contained with scrutinizing eye, murmured, with a satisfied smile, while refolding and repinning the cloth, "All right; nothing is wanted. Poor child, I hope it will prove useful to her." Then calling her back, she said, "Take this, my dear, but promise me not to open it until you come of age. You are twenty now; one year more, and you may examine the contents of this package. Will you promise?"

"I promise you, Grandmother."

"You may, then, do with it what you think best;

if you wish to advise with Mr. Raymond about it, perhaps he can counsel you in the most fitting manner. Take it away; I hear our kind neighbor entering the garden."

Next morning Mr. Raymond came early, remaining the whole day. Mrs. Adlaw was visibly sinking, but the physician said that it might be possible for her to survive another day. In the evening Mr. Raymond bade her farewell, saying that to-morrow he would not come until the afternoon train had arrived, as, possibly, it might bring an answer to Edith's letter to Mrs. Wolden. Mrs. Adlaw said, "by that time, Sir, I may not be able to speak to you again, therefore let me now thank you for all your unwavering kindness to us, and let me hear you say, once more, that you will always remain my granddaughter's faithful friend."

Mr. Raymond was deeply moved, and the pitiful sobs of Edith added to his disquiet, but he mastered his emotion, and replied, clearly and firmly, "my love for your grandchild is equal to yours, and will perish only with my last breath. Will this assurance satisfy you?"

"I thank you, Sir; and now, farewell to this world." A gentle smile lit up her features, and Mr. Raymond left her, wiping the tears from his eyes.

The evening of the following day Edith met him at the door; her eyes were swollen with weeping, and with tremulous voice, she said, "O, Sir! my grandmother is almost gone."

He hurried into the room, holding up a letter he had taken from his breast. The dying woman saw it, and her lips moved. Edith bent down, and understood—"Its contents—quick!"

She tore it open, and read aloud—

"My dearest child, we all sympathize deeply with you, in your sad affliction. You must make your home with us, at once. About your future plans, if you should not wish to alter them, we can talk when you are with us. Let me know the time of your arrival, and my husband will await you at the dépôt.

"Yours, affectionately, MARY WOLDEN."

A gentle smile passed over Mrs. Adlaw's countenance; her hands folded, as if in prayer; her eyes

closed; one deep, long-drawn breath, and the light had gone out forever.

After Edith had paid love's last tribute to the dead, she went, in company with Mr. Raymond, to the station, and shortly afterwards two heavy hearts were torn asunder, to be separated for weeks and months, perhaps, for years.

He started at once for his home, on the last day before Christmas.

CHAPTER XVI.

SUCCESS.

Mournful thoughts were Edith's companion on her journey to Freiburg. She was now separated from all that had once made life beautiful to her; those whom she had lost, and who had been dearest to her, she had left behind. It was, therefore, like balm upon her bruised spirits, when, on her arrival at Freiburg, she felt the warm and kindly pressure of Mr. Wolden's hand, and listened to the heartfelt greeting, "welcome to your new home, my dear friend," of Lucy, his daughter.

As they were driving home, Mr. Wolden said, "we wish, my dear Miss Adlaw, that you should consider our house your future home, until some one," he added, pleasantly, "to whom you will grant more rights, shall take you from us."

Edith colored, but answered, quietly, "I feel your kindness deeply, Sir, and appreciate it with all my

heart, yet I feel that I shall be best contented if I follow the plan which, in my letter I have already imparted to your wife."

"We will not speak of this at present. Perhaps, after the lapse of some weeks, you will allow yourself to be influenced by my wife."

Edith was now three weeks in her new home, and had somewhat recovered her tranquillity. The considerate kindness by which she was surrounded, as also the entire change in her life, soothed her wounded heart, and refreshed her depressed spirits. Mrs. Wolden had spoken with her about her future, but, having vainly tried to persuade her from her purpose, saw, at last, that Edith would, indeed, feel happier, if she would follow her own way; therefore, she said, "I believe, my dear, that it is best to let you have your own wish, but remember that our arms are always open to receive you."

Edith had written to Mr. Raymond, informing him of her safe arrival, and also of the warm welcome she had received from her friends, begging him, at the same time, to use all his influence to procure her a suitable situation, for, she said, "I could never feel

happy while being dependent, though my friends try very hard to persuade me to make my home with them. They have, on my entreaty, promised to look about for me, and if you too unite your efforts in my behalf, I hope it will not be very long before I shall be settled for the future."

A fortnight after writing this letter she received one in return, in which Mr. Raymond informed her that, through the kindness of a friend, he had heard that in the neighborhood of C., there lived a Baron von Einsiedel, with his only daughter, the Countess von Metland, who was seeking a companion. "He resides at his country seat, 'Einsiedel,'" the missive went on, "which a century ago was a cloister. It is fifteen minutes' walk from a small village called S., and, although solitary, is made very attractive by its romantic environs. This, 'little one,' is all I know. I should not advise you to try to procure this situation, as companion to the Countess, had I not also heard that she is of a very amiable disposition, and also, because I fervently hope that the time will not be very distant, when my 'little one' will call me to her side, to part no more. Ask Mr. Wolden, perhaps he

knows the Baron; or, if not himself, one of his friends. They might speak in your behalf, and through their influence you might get the situation."

Edith spoke to Mrs. Wolden at once, and she acquainted her husband with the facts. He had never heard of the family, but thought it likely that his friend, General Potter, might. He therefore proceeded to his house without delay.

After a few hours' absence he returned, announcing to Edith the pleasing news, that "the General knew Baron von Einsiedel quite well, although the latter was many years his senior, and that he had written to him at once, recommending her strongly. The General did not know the Countess personally, but had heard much of her beauty and goodness when a young girl, for she is now over forty years of age. She had been the attraction at the court for several years, when she married Count von Metland, to whom she was devotedly attached. After a few years of happy wedded life her husband died, and in the same year she lost her only child, a daughter. These heavy losses have thrown the Countess into great depression of spirit, which induced her to retire

from the world with her father, who is now so old as to be liable to be called hence any day. At Einsiedel, his country seat, they reside in great seclusion. The Countess chooses for her companions only young ladies, preferring such to those of more advanced years. As the place is very solitary, and they live there like recluses, it is rather difficult to induce young ladies to seek the employment of even so kind and gentle a mistress. These are the statements of my friend. I told the General, however, that you were aware of the solitary situation of the estate, but that you, nevertheless, would take it as a favor, if he would intercede for you with the Baron von Einsiedel."

Soon after this General Potter received an answer, written by the Countess, in which she expressed, in the most flattering terms, her readiness to engage any one whom a gentleman so highly honored by her father might recommend; but made it a particular request, that the young lady in question should be informed of the very monotonous life she would have to lead, and how very gloomy an aspect the place of her future home presented, especially in

winter. All this Edith was told, who, far from being daunted, rather rejoiced at the prospect of living apart from the world. If she only received kindness and shelter, she would ask no more. Another letter from herself reached Einsiedel, and an answer to that arranged everything satisfactorily. Edith was to be, the next Monday, at C., where, at the depot, a sleigh would await her, to convey her to her future home.

Edith left Freiburg early on Monday, and toward evening reached C., where the Countess' equipage awaited her. After having partaken of some slight refreshment, she entered the sleigh, filled with warm wraps and coverings of fur. Coachman and footman, after having attended to her comfort, most respectfully, took their seats, and she was driven to her future abode.

CHAPTER XVII.

AT HER NEW HOME.

In a few minutes they left the last houses of the city behind them. It was a clear, bitter cold day. Rapidly the sleigh flew over the smooth, snowy surface, past trees and bushes, alongside fields and murmuring brooks, gurgling and singing beneath their icy coverings, which, touched by the rays of the sun, sparkled in dazzling brilliancy. The air was bracing. Edith's eyes shone, and her cheeks glowed. A sleigh ride was a novelty to her, and she enjoyed it accordingly. Her heart felt lighter, her spirits rose, and with inward pleasure she thought of her future duties, and the life that was in prospect for her.

The sleigh had now reached S. The sound of the tinkling bells around the necks of the snorting, steaming steeds had brought curious eyes to the windows of the houses, to have a peep at the passing

travelers, who dashed through the village, and now were entering a dense forest. The boughs of the large, tall trees, bending beneath their heavy loads of snow, creaked and sighed, and some fell, crushed by their weight. A hare, chased up from its lair by their approach, rapidly crossed their road and disappeared. A raven, perched upon a branch, croaked a doleful welcome with his hoarse voice, flew up, and alighted at some distance further. These were the only sounds, save the sleigh bells, Edith heard; all else was silent—silent as the grave. Already she could discern, in the distance, the dark towers and walls of her new home. A few minutes more, and they had halted before a heavy massive portal, thickly studded with great iron nails. A high and solid stone wall surrounded the building. The footman stepped from his seat and rang a bell, whose far-off sound Edith could faintly hear in the distance. The portal opened by some invisible hand, and she entered an immense courtyard, paved with small stones, in whose centre a fountain spouted its crystal waters into a large stone basin. The footman accompanied her toward the house, in whose hall she was received by

an old servant dressed in livery. Edith handed him her card, saying, "Be pleased to tell her ladyship, the Countess von Metland, that I await her commands." Then, sweeping past him, in proud indifference, she entered the room, whose door, with a profound bow, he held open for her.

"Most strange," he muttered, as he went toward his mistress' apartments, thoughtfully studying the card Edith had given him. After a short interval he came back, saying, "Her ladyship awaits you," and led the way.

It was night now, and the room into which she entered was dimly lighted by a couple of alabaster lamps. It was a spacious apartment, richly furnished.

"Miss Adlaw, my Lady," announced the man, and placing a chair for her, he withdrew.

"Come hither, my dear," called a sweet voice, from the depth of a well-cushioned arm chair.

Edith advanced and bowed lowly before the speaker, who, even yet, at her matronly age, was lovely to look upon in the soft shade of the covered lamps, and, dressed in a loose dark velvet gown, trimmed with fur, her slippered feet resting upon an em-

broidered cushion, was lying in a reclining attitude, examining Edith's features almost anxiously. "Draw this seat nearer, Dear, and sit down. May I call you Edith?" she asked, quickly, yet hesitatingly. "The name," she added, apologizingly, "is dear to me."

"If your Ladyship pleases, most certainly," replied Edith at once, rejoiced at her kind reception.

"How did you like your journey? It is very cold to-day."

"I enjoyed it very much. The air was cold, yet fresh and pure."

"I am glad to hear you say so; then, perhaps, this place did not strike you as so very gloomy."

"Almost everything looks desolate at this season of the year, my Lady, yet," she added, with a look at the Countess, "it looks the brighter within."

The Countess understood her meaning, smiled pleasantly, and said, "I hope you will continue to think so, Edith"—and it seemed to her as if her mistress lingered fondly over the name. "You must be wearied, however; will you be ready for me to-morrow morning at ten o'clock?"

"I shall be at your Ladyship's service, at any hour you name."

An aged female servant entered the room now, summoned by her mistress' bell.

"Show Miss Adlaw to her rooms, Susanne, and see that all her wants are promptly attended to." So Edith retired for the night.

"At what hour do you wish your breakfast, Miss? Her ladyship is accustomed to take hers alone in her rooms, and so does his lordship."

"Let me have it, please, between eight and nine o'clock."

"Very well, Miss. If you wish for anything, you have only to ring this bell;" and with a low courtesey, the housekeeper withdrew.

Edith now began to make herself comfortable for the night, and then sat down to write Mr. Raymond a minute description of the past week. Punctually at the hour named, next morning, Edith proceeded to the Countess' apartments, and was greeted in the most gracious manner.

"Now, my dear Edith, I must first inform you of the services I require from you," her ladyship be-

gan: "I shall never need you before ten o'clock; the hours until then are entirely left to your own disposal. Sometimes I shall not need you until twelve o'clock; this depends entirely on how I may feel in the morning. I am fond of reading, conversation and music. In summer, we shall take walks together, in which my father will sometimes join us. In winter, I leave the house seldom, but it does not follow that, therefore, you also should be deprived of the fresh air. You may take your walks whenever you are not occupied in my rooms. Two o'clock is our dinner hour. My companion has, hitherto, always taken her meals with myself and my father, and I should wish you to do the same. After dinner, I am in the habit of taking a rest, and the time until four, is your own. The evenings we shall spend together until ten o'clock, when I retire for the night. Now be pleased to let me hear you play."

"Has your Ladyship any particular choice?"

"Play anything. At present I wish to hear your touch; so much depends upon that."

Edith played several pieces; at first rather timidly, then, forgetting that she had a listener, with her

usual skill and spirit. When she stopped, the Countess exclaimed, "This is delightful. Your touch is exquisite, firm and decided, yet, at the same time, soft and velvety. It is much like"—then interrupting herself, as if another thought had struck her—"Come, child, sit opposite me, and let me examine your features."

Edith did as she was ordered, yet secretly annoyed, thinking that this was not in the bargain. Her features therefore expressed, in a measure, the thoughts that were at work. Her mouth wore a stern expression, and throwing her head back in haughty displeasure, she looked her mistress straight in the eye.

A faint shriek, as if in pain, escaped the Countess at this motion, and pressing her hand tightly to her breast, she scanned Edith's features eagerly. At last, with a gentle sigh, she fell back into her seat, while hot tears fell from her eyes.

Edith's features softened immediately at the sight of the sad expression in her mistress' countenance, and kneeling before her she took one slender hand in hers, stroking it gently, in silent sympathy. She kept on, smoothing the wasted fingers, until the tears

stopped flowing, and her eyes looked down with a mournful smile upon the upturned face, so beautiful and tender. "You are in mourning, dear, have you lost some near relation?" and she laid her disengaged hand softly upon her companion's head.

"I have, your Ladyship," and Edith's eyes became dim with grief, and her lips trembled at the recollection of her recent loss.

"Poor child. Was it your mother; or, perhaps, a father?"

"Neither. I lost my grandmother, my only relation," and the fast-falling tears rolled slowly down her cheeks, and her bosom heaved with scarcely suppressed sobs.

"Then you have neither father nor mother," the Countess inquired, pityingly.

"No, your Ladyship. I never knew my mother, and scarcely remember my father."

"Who were your parents, dear Edith?—do not deem me impertinent," she added, hastily, seeing her flush. "My heart yearns for you, so lonely and so young as you are. I loved you when I read your name attached to the letter you sent me, and when I

saw your face you grew still dearer to me, though sometimes it pains me to look at you."

"My parents were peasants," and her head rose proudly. "Humble, yet honest peasants."

"But how did you get such a superior education," she wished to ask, but changed the subject abruptly, thinking that, as yet, she had no right to pry closer into her companion's past life, and only said, "this will do, dear," telling herself that, perhaps, later, if Edith became attached to her, she might inquire further, and be allowed to lighten the burden that now made her look so sad and downcast.

CHAPTER XVIII.

CARNIVAL TIME.

Months passed on. In the meantime, the snow melted from the ground, the air grew balmy, green leaves peeped from the earth, and birds that had passed the cold season in milder climates came back to build their nests. The life that Edith led was very lonesome, yet suited to her present condition of mind. Letters from her friends in Freiburg told her that she was not forgotten, and long epistles, full of patient love, from Mr. Raymond, were as rays of light falling upon her path. Besides, the unwavering, nay, daily increasing kindness of the Countess towards herself, and the attentions she received from all in the house, made her abode pleasant, and chained her heart more and more to the lady who, with such gentleness, tried to win her affection.

One thing, only, puzzled, and, in some measure, annoyed her. The Baron, when in her presence,

watched her unceasingly, yet furtively. Every movement, every look, every word she uttered, was noticed by him. But when, annoyed by this constant scrutiny, she turned her gaze full upon him, he instantly withdrew his eyes, moving uneasily in his seat, evidently uncomfortable. This strange behavior perplexed her greatly; still, as the Baron, except at meal times, rarely came in contact with her, it did not seriously interrupt her comfort.

Long walks in the forest with the Countess, a footman at some distance, commenced with the return of Spring. The Countess now seemed to be happy only when Edith was by her side, and had also grown more cheerful, with smiles less rare. So Edith thought, and was confirmed in her belief by Susanne, the housekeeper, a good-natured, talkative old body, who had known the Countess from a child.

"Her Ladyship," she would say, "has taken amazingly to you, Miss Adlaw. I never have seen her so greatly attached to any of her companions before. Your comfort appears to be her first consideration. She has wonderfully improved in her spirits, too, since your coming. I can assure you, Miss, that

weeks sometimes passed in which no one saw her smile. Now it is quite otherwise; tears are rare, and smiles in plenty. Heaven be praised!"

One rainy day Edith felt particularly downhearted. She had had no letter from Mr. Raymond for a long time, and it made her heart very heavy. She was sitting opposite the Countess, employed with some fine needlework. The lady had observed her silently for some minutes, trying to discover her thoughts, for that another cause beside the loss of her grandmother depressed her companion's spirits, she had long ago suspected. It is not natural, she argued within herself, that one so young should abandon herself to grief so unceasingly, and, therefore, some other burden must trouble her mind. If I could win her confidence, and induce her to open her heart to me, perchance I might soothe, if not console her."

At last a deep sigh parted Edith's lips.

"What makes you sad, my child?" asked the Countess.

Edith blushed deeply.

"Will you not confide in me? There is, beside

your grief about your grandmother's death, yet another cause that troubles you, and brings forth these sighs and tears. Do you not believe, my child, that I take a loving interest in all that concerns you?"

"I am aware of your considerate kindness to me, gracious Countess, yet why should I trouble your ear with my tale of sorrow, while your ladyship has so much of your own to grieve over? It would be selfish, besides taking too much advantage of your forbearance."

"Nay, nay, Edith; have not I encouraged you to speak to me freely, as a daughter would speak to a mother? You are young and inexperienced; I have seen the world, and might, by my advice, perhaps, be able to help you."

"Dear Countess," and the work fell from her hands, and tears gushed from her eyes; "no one can help me—no one," she repeated, shaking her head mournfully.

"Will you not let me hear the reason why you think so?" And at last, with coaxing, and adroit questions, the Countess drew from Edith's reluctant lips the story of her love. She was made acquainted

with the noble deeds of the man who, setting aside the prejudices of society, acknowledged only the voice of his heart ; who, loving a girl far, far beneath him in station, raised her to his level, by cultivating her mind—took her to his heart, wishing to make her his wife, and who, even then, clung fondly and faithfully to her, when she told him that there were reasons which she could not confess that made their union impossible, and that, in future, they must be nothing more than friends.

The Countess was deeply moved by such unselfish constancy, and asked, “And those reasons, Edith, may I not hear them?”

“You must pardon me, my Lady ; I did not even impart them to my grandmother. I have promised that, should they cease to exist, I would tell Mr. Raymond at once, and ask him to take me home as his wife. I doubt whether this will ever happen,” she added, despondingly.

What could the kind Countess say but—“Do not despair, my child. You are young, and many years are before you, in which everything may change, to your happiness.”

In May the Countess engaged a suite of rooms at a hotel in C., for a week, to give herself a change, she told her father, who listened with pleasure and surprise, believing that it indicated an entire revolution in his daughter's feelings, leading, as he fondly hoped, to her ultimate recovery.

But, although the Countess felt much better, and suffered a great deal less from depression of spirits, since Edith was with her, this was not her reason for taking this journey, but the intention and the wish that her companion should be roused from her sadness, and that her monotonous life should, for a short time, become interrupted by the busy scenes of the city.

Once in C., the Countess was almost constantly out with Edith, taking carriage drives through the environs, or visiting the most interesting parts of the city. The week passed rapidly, and Edith benefited greatly by the change. When they returned to the country every thing looked green and fresh, and the birds were singing gaily in the trees. The Summer went pleasantly by, and when the first part of Winter had also gone, the Countess again proposed

a week in the city, to let Edith see the joys and pleasures of a Catholic Carnival. "It is Carnival time, my dear," she said, "and the excitement which attends the occasion will amuse you."

Consequently another visit was paid to C. The Countess procured several masquerade costumes, without her companion's knowledge, and one evening, when they stood together at the window, observing the crowd of many-colored masks in the shimmering gaslight in the street below, watching the different dominoes as they flitted hither and thither, following here a gallant knight in shining armor and feathered helmet, talking there to a pretty flower girl of the sunny south—one chasing a coquetish Spanish Donna down the street, another mysteriously offering his services as fortune-teller to a stately wandering German Burg-Fräulein—the Countess, seeing by her companion's expression of face, how greatly she was interested in the gay play beneath them, proposed that she also should step down and join in the general enjoyment.

"You forget, gracious Countess," replied Edith, "that I have no companion."

"One sees, my dear," answered the lady, laughingly, "that you have been brought up in a Protestant country, and are, therefore, unacquainted with the liberties *we* enjoy at Carnival time. Your mask will be your protector, my dear. You will be timid only for the first few minutes; once among this gay crowd all restraint wears off, and with almost intoxicated senses you give yourself up to the freedom a mask may enjoy. Here, try to drink from the cup friend Carnival holds to your lips, and let me watch you, as you charm some gay gallant in your costume of a pretty Swiss peasant girl."

With these words she drew from a wardrobe a superb masquerade dress of a peasant girl of the snowy mountains.

With wondering eyes Edith looked upon the charming dress, still declining to accept her mistress' seductive offer.

"What, still undecided?" smiled the latter. "Let me put your scruples aside by telling you a little anecdote, after which you, perhaps, will not think it unbecoming in a lady thus to enjoy herself."

"You misconstrue my hesitation, my Lady. How

could I consider any thing unbecoming in which *you* encourage me. No, it is fear; I am afraid to venture alone among the strange crowd below."

"It will wear off in a few minutes, and having once tasted of this pleasure, I am convinced that you will wish to go again. However, to set your mind at rest, let me relate to you my anecdote. It is true. I heard it from my husband's own lips. Duke Oswald's son's tutor had a friend, a young clergyman, who, while the Duke resided at his country seat at A., was frequently invited by his Highness to dinner; he had also received an invitation from the latter to come and spend a few days at his town residence during the Carnival. The clergyman gladly accepted it, and when the time came proceeded thither. Now, he was a Protestant, and never had witnessed a Catholic Carnival. The tutor had been, on one occasion, introduced to our Grand Duchess by his employer, and, some way or other, her Highness had either heard from Duke Oswald of his friend, the clergyman, or had noticed him herself, for he was, so I heard, a very handsome man. However, one evening, when the two friends sat cosily in a private room

at a hotel, talking, over their wine, of old times and by-gone days, the door opened, and in stepped a graceful shepherd girl, with beautiful golden hair, her hat coquetishly set upon one side of her head. Touching the clergyman playfully with her crook, upon the arm, she said, 'It would become thee better, Shepherd, to mind thy flock, than to spend thy time here in the gay Carnival time.'

"Nothing daunted, the clergyman answered, letting his astonished eyes rest admiringly upon the graceful form before him, 'if thou, fair Shepherdess, wilt bear me companionship, let us depart at once,' and getting up, to offer his arm to the mask, advanced towards her; but striking an airy pirouette, she gave a silvery laugh and vanished quickly. 'This must be a dame of station, judging from her easy movements and well-modulated voice!' said the clergyman.

"'You may well think so,' replied his friend, who had recognized the mask the minute she had entered, 'and some one to whom you would not have spoken as you did, if you had known as much as I, for it was our Grand Duchess.' After this the clergyman ordered an extra bottle of wine, 'to drink the health of

the noble Shepherdess,' he said—'in order to drown his consternation,' his friend declared, when relating the story to Duke Oswald.

"Now, my dear, have you decided?" the Countess asked, holding the dress temptingly before Edith's sight.

"I will try."

Soon afterwards the Countess saw her walk timidly on the other side of the street, looking carefully about her, and avoiding, as much as possible, the crowds which were gathered all around; but sometime afterward she disappeared, chasing a black domino around the corner.

"It will do her good," murmured her mistress, to herself, and left the window, sighing deeply, remembering the time when she, too, had thus enjoyed herself.

Several hours later Edith came back, gay and merry, stating that she had enjoyed herself greatly, and giving a minute description of all that had happened, while her mistress listened with pleased interest.

"But you do not wish to go to-morrow evening

again, Edith; you are too much afraid to go among the crowd. Is it not so?"

A bright smile was the only answer to the Countess' pleasantry.

She did go, again and again, until only one more evening was left before their return to "Einsiedel."

It was their last evening in town. Edith was ready to go upon her expedition, as she called it, in the personification of Summer—a white, short dress, of some fleecy stuff, looped up with bunches of ears of wheat and field flowers; wreaths of roses around her head, neck and arms; a sickle in one hand, and in the other a rake, negligently thrown over her shoulder.

She had scarcely been two minutes in the street when a mask, in the costume of a Polish Grandee, came near her, trying to pull a flower from one of her wreaths.

"Shame on thee!" cried Edith, turning quickly, and catching him in the act. "Trying to get by stealth what a gentleman might get easily by gallantry. Do not the nobles of thy country know better."

"Fair Season of the Roses, forgive my treason, and

grant thy servant one flower from thy wreaths and one glance from thy bright eyes."

"To punish thee, I say, get both, if thou art able," and, like a flash, she mingled with the multitude. A look back showed her, however, that the mask was on her track. She twined herself in and out between others, to escape his observation—hid between these and stooped behind those, but of no avail; her pursuer still followed her. At last she darted sideways, toward the door of a hotel, and looking once back, saw him stand still, undecided, looking up and down the street. He evidently had lost sight of her. Entering quickly, she hurried up stairs, pushed open a door that stood ajar, and found herself in a large room, dimly lighted. Tired, and out of breath with the chase, she threw herself upon a sofa, in the furthest corner of the room, to rest.

How long she had been lying thus she could not have said, when the door was thrown open, and a voice that made her start said, "Here, dearest, enter here until I have rung for a servant. Are you tired, darling?"

"Very. How could I be otherwise?" answered a

fretful voice. "Hu! how chilly it is here. Hurry, Maurice, I am shivering."

"Sit down, dearest, and make yourself comfortable until I return."

Edith had raised herself cautiously, to see the face of the gentleman, and quickly let herself down again, for it was, indeed, Maurice Raymond. Here was a dilemma. What should she do? They might depart, she hoped, and then she could leave the room unperceived. If they raised the light, of course they would discover her, but her mask would be her protection. At all events, she must not lose her presence of mind. Her heart beat almost audibly. Who was this woman with whom he was traveling? for that she had on a traveling suit she had time to notice by the quick glance she had thrown at them.

Presently he came back. "I have engaged rooms for the night, my dear wife; let us go to them."

"How long shall we remain here, Maurice?" asked the lady, almost crossly.

"As long as you like, love, only remember that in two weeks we must be at home, for my father wishes to take a journey to C., in whose neighborhood, as he

says, he wishes to visit a dear friend of his." With these words he led his wife from the room.

As soon as the door had closed upon them, Edith sat up, tore off her mask, and fanned herself violently. What had she heard! His wife? and she felt like crying out, with joy. Then one reason, and she knew *now* that this had been her chief reason, was removed. *Now* Maurice Raymond, for his own peace' sake, dared not show that he had known her before, for, if she judged his wife's voice rightly, she would be a very exacting and jealous companion. What need she care, now, whether he knew her to be lowly born, since he could not taunt his father with her lowly ancestors? Hitherto she had thought her low birth to be her chief reason for thinking their union an impossibility, but now it became clear to her that it had been his jealousy of which she was most afraid. What if her pride smarted and hurt? It had to succumb to her love, which was all powerful. She was free! free! she said to herself, exultingly, and at liberty to call her lover to her side, to part no more. Yet, something else Maurice Raymond had said before leaving

the room: "His father intended to visit a dear friend near C. It might be *herself*," she whispered in her heart, while her bosom heaved with joyful excitement. "It *must* be myself;" and tears started to her eyes at the thought that she soon would see him again; that he would come to her. What delicious happiness had the Carnival brought to her; what unspeakable joy. How bright the future now looked, and how beautiful the world seemed once more.

With beaming eyes and burning brow, she arrived at home, pouring into her kind mistress' ears the joyful tale that the chief reason ceased to exist; that with its disappearance the other was null and void; and that, in consequence of this discovery, she could hurry to *him* who had loved her so faithfully, and tell him she would be his at last. Then the Countess knew that out of her young companion's joy would again come sadness and desolation for herself, and what would be Edith's gain would prove her own loss. Therefore, while she rejoiced at the good tidings, she yet could not help bewailing in her heart her own misfortune.

CHAPTER XIX.

PATIENCE REWARDED.

In the meanwhile, a great event had taken place in Mr. Raymond's family. After several months of hard strife with his heart, Maurice Raymond, aided by absence and time, had succumbed to reason, and allowed himself to believe that those weeks at Freiburg must remain to him as a beautiful dream, and, although the awakening might not be entirely to his taste, he had to remember what was expected of him, and act accordingly. A few months later he began to applaud himself for having chosen reality instead of romance, for he had succeeded in securing the hand of Ida Hall, only daughter of the old and wealthy ex-Prime Minister, von Hall, who, having got gray in the service of his king, had lately sent in his resignation, and with honors, and the gracious permission of his sovereign to put a "von" to his name (which indicates nobility in Germany), retired from

service, with his pockets well lined, and the pleasing consciousness that his resignation was regretted at Court. His only child had reached the time of life when ladies such as she, with not much thought beyond fashion, money and station, feel flattered at being called young. Being one evening invited to a large private ball, she met Maurice Raymond, who had come to the Capital to spend a week. They were introduced to each other, and a mutual liking followed. The lady, remembering her age, viewed him with favor, and the gentleman, having heard of her father's well-filled coffers, and knowing the high station she sprang from, considered her worthy of his special attention. They met, again and again. At last, grown bold, Maurice asked the all-important question. She referred him, blushingly, to her father, and did not withdraw her hand as he gratefully pressed it. A week afterward, when every thing was satisfactorily arranged, the engagement was publicly announced. Friends and relations came to congratulate Maurice upon his engagement, and when he heard, now and then, the remarks, seemingly envious, that were made upon the matter;

when, above all, he noticed the gratified looks of his own family, and listened as his sister and sister-in-law explained, minutely, who the young lady was, laying particular stress upon "the Prime Minister *von* Hall's daughter," then, more than ever, he congratulated himself upon the wisdom of his course and the satisfaction it afforded to his family.

Time wore on, and the wedding took place. A grand and splendid spectacle; for was not the bride the only child of *her*, and the bridegroom the favored son and brother of *his* family? Four weeks the newly-wedded couple intended to be absent on their wedding tour, and, after their return, Mr. Raymond wished to take a journey—a pleasure trip, to see a friend, he said to *them*—to see his "Sweetheart," he said to *himself*. His heart had doubly yearned for her, in all the bustle and excitement which this wedding had brought with it, and often he had asked himself, whether the time would not soon come when he, too, might bring home his darling, not rich and high-born, as his son's wife was, yet superior to her in everything else.

Edith had spent two wretched weeks of expectation, since her return to Einsiedel. "Would he come, or was it some other friend he meant to visit?" she asked herself, more than a hundred times in the day. Doubt and hope, fear and joy, varied in her breast.

The third week was nearly over, and hope began to die in her heart, making room for sadness and bitter disappointment. No letter—no sign from him. "What did it mean? Had he become tired of waiting, and"—a flood of tears finished the sentence. Just then, some one knocked at her door. It was a servant, handing her a card, and saying, "the gentleman is waiting below." She did not look at the card in the presence of the servant, fearing to betray herself, but only said, "say that I shall be down directly." But when he had gone, and she was alone, she held it to her eyes and read, "Maurice Raymond!" A cry of joy—away she flew, and in a few minutes was pressed to his loving heart.

"My 'little one;' my own dear 'Sweetheart,'" and his eyes grew moist, as he noticed how pale and thin she had grown. "Are they kind to you, dearest?"

"They could not be more so, Sir," she answered, her looks hanging on his in rapturous joy. "No sister, no mother, could be more thoughtful of my comfort than the Countess is."

"Then you would not care to leave them?" he questioned, rather jealously.

"That depends," she answered, smiling archly, "with *whom* I should leave, and where I had to go."

"Would you go with me, darling, and to my home?" he asked, doubtingly, although his pulse throbbed wildly, and his heart beat almost audibly

"Why not, Sir, if you would take me?" and she laid her head softly upon his breast.

He raised it quickly, and holding her from him, so as to have a full view of her face, said, solemnly, "Edith, do you mean it?" and the convulsive working of his features showed her how deeply he felt. "Do not mock me!" he cried, almost threateningly.

"I am weary without you, Sir," she whispered, folding her arms around his neck. "Will you take me with you?"

Fervently, he said, "Bless you for these words, darling, bless you;" and drawing her still nearer to

his breast, he imprinted passionate kisses upon her brow and lips. "And your reasons, Edith," he asked, after a while, "Are they gone?"

"The chief one has disappeared, and the other will not hold good now, since the first has gone, and my heart asks for its right."

"You promised me, darling, that if once you should consider yourself free to give yourself to me, you would not keep me waiting, but soon become my wife. Dearest, when shall it be?"

"Let us speak of that the next time we meet, Sir."

"And *then*, we meet to part no more, 'little one.' Will not your birthday be soon?"

"The first week in May."

"Then let that day be our wedding-day. Will you not recompense me for waiting so long?"

"If you wish it, be it so."

"I shall inform my family of my coming happiness, as soon as I return home, and then attend to everything else. We had a wedding in our family lately. My son, Maurice, married, some weeks ago."

"Your second son, Sir?" she asked, feeling almost like a hypocrite.

"Yes; my second son. He has done very well," he added, proudly.

A servant now entered, bearing upon a silver waiter a note. "For you, Sir," he said, bowing respectfully. "From her ladyship, the Countess."

Mr. Raymond read: "Honored Sir—I shall be pleased to have your company at dinner, an hour hence." He handed it to Edith, and said to the servant, "tell her ladyship, that I do myself the pleasure of accepting her invitation."

"Shall I show you to your room, Sir?"

"If you please." And pressing Edith's hand warmly, he followed the servant.

The dinner passed off very pleasantly. The Countess warmly expressed the pleasure she felt in becoming acquainted with Edith's noble friend. "Now," she said, laying her hand affectionately upon her companion's arm, "I suppose you wish to rob me of my treasure."

"This, indeed, gracious Countess, is my most ardent wish. We have been engaged such a long time," he added, smilingly.

"I know it, and also how patiently you have waited. Must I lose her soon?"

"Nothing positively is fixed, as yet. Still we have so far agreed, that her next birthday, the first week in May, should also be our wedding-day."

The Countess sighed deeply, and said, "as Edith has no home, I wish her marriage to take place here."

"Gracious Countess," cried Edith, deeply moved, "you overwhelm me with kindness."

"There is nothing I should think too much for you, my dear." Then, with tears in her eyes, she said to Mr. Raymond, "I shall miss her sadly."

CHAPTER XX.

A THUNDERBOLT.

The second evening after his return from Einsiedel, Mr. Raymond was sitting at home, in the midst of his family. Maud, with her husband, had come, on purpose to welcome her father. William, his eldest son, with Amanda, and Maurice, with his wife, were also present. The children had been sent to bed.

"You seem thoughtful this evening, Father, and not much in the humor to talk!" said Maud.

"I was only waiting for a pause, my Daughter. You have kept up, until now, such a lively conversation, that I could only listen. Now, however, since I have the word, I shall impart some important news to you. I shall be married the first week in May."

If a thunderbolt had fallen among them, the effect could not have been more striking, and the expression of the different faces would have been worthy of

a painter's pencil. William's expressed astonishment mingled with a great deal of secret enjoyment. His wife looked like an insulted queen. In Mr. Holborne's countenance one could read simply curiosity to know who the lady was; but that of Maud, his wife, spoke the indignation she felt. Maurice looked in speechless wonder at his father, while Ida twirled her golden glasses in haughty indifference.

Seeing that no one spoke, Mr. Raymond continued, calmly, while a faint smile played around his lips: "I have to thank you much, Amanda, for the unceasing care and attention you have bestowed upon me and my family, and I only thought it right that you should be relieved of it, at last."

"I never thought it a burden, nor have I ever complained," said the complimented lady, in an aggrieved tone.

"I am also aware of that, my dear, and my gratitude is so much deeper."

"Well, Father," said William, "here is my hand, and my best wishes; certainly *I* should not have waited so long. A household without a wife is a sad affair."

"Brute!" muttered Amanda.

"Never mind, dear. You are too strong and healthy to give me a chance," said her husband, soothingly. "Were you old, or in feeble health, I should not have made this remark; as it is, it cannot concern you."

Somewhat mollified, by being called *young*, Amanda smoothed down her ruffled plumage, and let it pass.

"I hope you may be happy, Father," said Maurice, warmly; and Ida also gave the tips of her fingers.

Maud would not speak, but sat in dignified silence. Then her husband got up, and begged Mr. Raymond to accept his and his wife's best wishes.

"Thank you, my children. I knew that you would look at the matter in the right light."

At these words William felt like roaring out aloud, but restrained his visible inclination, pulling his moustache vigorously, instead. A silence fell upon the circle, all waiting for more news; for some more exact information. But as Mr. Raymond seemed not inclined to satisfy their curiosity, but sat meditatively

watching the smoke of his cigar, Amanda broke the silence by inquiring: "And the lady—is she rich?"

"Poor!" answered her father-in-law, at once.

A visible expression of contempt passed over the inquirer's features.

"Of good family I suppose?" Maud, at last, deigned to ask.

An almost imperceptible flush dyed the features of him who was thus questioned, but he replied, distinctly, "She is not well-born."

With the expression of a martyr, his daughter fell back into her seat, while Ida, with a sarcastic laugh, said, "A pauper! How romantic."

There was a dangerous flash in his eyes as Mr. Raymond said, "Let me remind you, Madam, that you speak of my future wife, and—the mistress of this house." And he emphasized the latter words.

"Is she accomplished, Father?" Maurice inquired.

"Highly so, my son;" and the questioner suppressed a sigh.

"Handsome?" he inquired further, not noticing his wife's angry look.

"You may judge for yourself; here is her picture."

And taking a case from his pocket, he handed it to William, who sat next him.

"Here is magnificent beauty," he exclaimed. "There is not a lovelier girl in the country."

"Husband!" sounded his better half's voice, reprovingly.

"My dear, I said 'girl,'" and thus he gallantly pacified her. "Here, have a look at it."

"Rather proud-looking," Amanda remarked, handing it to Maud.

She looked long and earnestly at it, but gave it to her husband without saying a word.

"You have shown great taste in your choice, Sir," was Mr. Holborn's comment.

"Really well-looking. How singular!" Ida said, superciliously, placing the picture in her husband's hand.

Maurice gave one look, and then let it drop upon the floor, with an effort suppressing a groan.

"How awkward!" exclaimed his wife.

"Take care!" cried his father, picking it up quickly, and examining it closely.

"I hope it is not damaged, Sir," said Maurice, pale as death, and hardly able to hide his emotion.

"Fortunately not," Mr. Raymond replied, putting it carefully back into his pocket. "Her name is Adlaw," he continued—"Edith Adlaw, and she is, at present, companion to the Countess von Metland."

"How fortunate for the children," broke in Maud, the tone of her voice revealing the feeling she could no longer conceal; "she can instruct them."

"I have thought of them, too," said her father, calmly. "I have selected a fitting school for them in L., for Eliza as well as the boys. I shall take them there myself to-morrow. I do not wish to have their ears poisoned and their young hearts set against my future wife. And, mark me, ladies"—and he looked severely at them—"if I hear of one word said against her to the little ones, I will certainly resent the indignity thus offered to me. You must know that I am master in my house. Now, good night. I may add, here, that the wedding is to take place at the residence of the Countess. It was her ladyship's particular request, but, nevertheless, I shall have our marriage celebrated in this house, also, and mean

that it shall be a splendid affair." Thus speaking, he left them to their own thoughts.

"I advise you, ladies," said William, after the door had closed, "to mind what our father has said. Some of you have already behaved very foolishly. I beg your pardon, Ida, for speaking so plainly, but you do not yet know my father. How you, Maud, could have behaved in such an absurd way, is more than I can tell. Of course, my father could not expect that you would take it coolly, but it was not necessary that you should have shown your resentment so very plainly, especially as there was nothing to be gained by it. For my part, I do not care much, and I repeat again, I wonder my father waited so long. As for the children, it would be wisest not to interfere at all. You would only make them unhappy, whereas, if you leave them alone, all may turn out well."

"The whole thing is shocking," burst out Maud; "and you are won over by that pretty face of hers."

"You speak nonsense, Sister; our father is entitled to respectful consideration from his children. Let us go, Amanda; we two, at least, will try to live in peace with our future mother."

“Heartless!” muttered Maud, to herself.

Maurice, after his wife had retired, and the others had also gone, remained behind, alone. Unpleasant reflections forced themselves upon him, making him uncomfortable. “How will she receive me,” he mused. “As a stranger, or as an old friend? Will gratitude that I once saved her from danger overcome the contempt she must feel for me?” And he wiped from his brow the large drops which this last thought had brought there. “I must leave it to her, and wait patiently. From her demeanor I shall have to take the cue how to deport myself toward her. Idiot that I was, to throw away the substance so near my reach, to grasp the shadow, and not to have known that wealth and titles are poor substitutes for a heart and intellect.” With this consoling conclusion he left the room, and proceeded to his own apartment.

CHAPTER XXI.

SAD RECOLLECTIONS.

The Countess von Metland had derived much pleasure from Mr. Raymond's visit. She was charmed by the elegance of his manners and highly entertained by the easy flow of his conversation. Joyfully she congratulated her favorite and dear child, as in fond affection she was wont to call Edith, on her good choice. "To show your betrothed how much I think of you, my dear," she said, a short time after his departure, "I mean, also, to ask his children to your wedding. It will gratify him, and show them, at the same time, that *you*, my child, are not without a friend."

"How can I ever repay your great goodness to me, gracious Countess?" And tears of gratitude filled Edith's eyes.

"By often thinking of me," she replied, stroking

her companion's hair fondly, "and by loving me always, Edith." Her voice trembled with sadness. "I never told you *why* my heart yearned for you from the first time I saw you. You remind me of one who was unspeakably dear to me, in features as well as in motions, though more in the latter; and your name is that of my little darling, whom I lost when she was only three years old." Tears interrupted her narrative.

"When my dear husband died," she proceeded, after a long pause, "I was nearly beside myself with grief. My father resolved to travel with me, to divert my thoughts from sorrow. He, with myself and my little Edith, and a couple of servants, one of whom was old Friederich, who, as you know, is still with us, consequently, left our estate. We had reached L., and determined to stay there a few days. The second day Edith's nurse had driven out with the child. A fire broke out in the city; a storm arose, and the flames leaped from house to house, from street to street, and soon a large part of L. was on fire. The uproar and tumult were fearful; the cries of the people and the ringing of the bells brought terror to

my heart, for the carriage had not yet returned. The panic increased and grew general; here children cried for their mothers; there mothers, seeking their offspring were wringing their hands in despair. The sky grew dark, from the rising smoke, and everywhere were heard the creaking and thunder of falling houses. My agony increased with every moment. Servants were sent out in every direction to find them, but to no purpose. Night drew near, when my father, with Friederich, entered my chamber. "My child!" I cried, "My child! For mercy's sake keep me not in suspense!" But no answer came. In their looks and downcast eyes, however, I read the worst, and I could bear no more. Husband and child—it was too much. I became unconscious. An illness followed—dangerous, so they told me afterward—and when I recovered my heart had died within me. I felt desolate, and desired to live alone with my grief. I retired with my father to Einsiedel. The nurse, I was later told by my father, was found dead in the street, her skull crushed, and my child beside her, also dead. Not far off, broken to pieces, lay the carriage. The horses, frightened and mad-

dened by the deafening noise, had dashed from street to street, until they were caught and brought home. The picture of my little darling will be ever impressed on my mind, as I saw her, for the last time, standing up in the carriage in her light blue silk dress, cut low in the neck, around which, attached to a delicate Venetian chain, she wore a medallion, with her father's likeness, set in rubies, on one side, with his arms and initials, H. v. M., in diamonds, on the other. Well I remember how the jewels sparkled and shone in the sunlight, and how her dark, wavy hair danced, lifted by the gentle breeze that stirred the air, as she looked up and threw me, smilingly, a kiss—alas, a parting kiss!" A flood of tears and sobs, that shook her delicate frame, interrupted this painful narrative.

"Dear Countess, why call back all these sad memories of the past? Why wilfully torture yourself by those pictures which have so saddened your life? Why will you not remember, instead, that those dear ones you have lost *here* are only waiting your coming *there*? Why entertain thoughts that distress you and make life a burden to you, when, if you would look into the future, and believe that your beloved ones

are not lost to you, you might call back to your heart peace and rest to brighten the remainder of your life?"

"*You* have done much, Edith, to make life less burdensome, but now you leave me, also. My child would now be as old as you. Her birthday was in July, while yours is in May—the sixth of May," she added, shudderingly, "the day of that dreadful fire! This year, however, I will endeavor to keep back these thoughts of sadness, for it will be the day that brings happiness to you. Let us not indulge in sadness any longer," she said, assuming, with an effort, a livelier tone. "I shall now set my purpose in action, and write to Mr. Raymond at once."

Mr. Raymond was again among his children, and, drawing a letter from his pocket, he said, "I have received this letter from the Countess von Metland. It contains an invitation for you all to my wedding: thinking, as her ladyship kindly says, to gratify me, and, at the same time, desiring to show my children that my future wife has, at least, one friend who interests herself in her behalf. Should

you wish to accept this very gracious invitation, the best thing would be to engage rooms in a hotel at C. for that time, for, although the Countess is so considerate as to express a wish that you all should be her guests, as her residence is large enough to hold a multitude of people, I think it more proper that we should not take so much advantage of her ladyship's kindness, but provide our own quarters."

"I believe that you are right, Father," said William. "And what do you say, ladies, to the invitation? Will you accept it or not?"

If it had been a wedding after the usual fashion, all, except, perhaps, William and Mr. Holborn, would have willingly declined the honor of being present, but now the ceremony would wear altogether a different look. Therefore, however distasteful this marriage might be, at least to the ladies, it now had assumed a dazzling aspect; for, would not a real Countess preside over all, and would not her noble presence add lustre to the brilliance of the scene? Would this not give such a grand and beautiful coloring to the affair that the world could not help thinking that the family of Raymond had

been favored with particular grace? They at once decided to accept her ladyship's invitation. Of course, they had made up their minds to slight their father's future wife—at least, as much as was advisable. Maud had said to her husband that she would simply ignore her, and Maurice's wife felt so little interest in the intruder, as she called Edith, that she resolved to treat her with cool indifference. But Amanda, after having conferred with her husband about the matter, had resolved to patronize her, and assist her with her advice, "as the poor girl, as was only natural to suppose, would know nothing whatever of household matters." For the present, however, all were to keep quiet, and make preparations for the wedding.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE SIXTH OF MAY.

The sixth of May—Edith's birthday, wedding day, and the day on which she came of age. Her wedding day! A throb of joy shot through her heart as she thought how much it brought to her. He whom her heart adored would be her own forever; no more parting between them in this world, but constant union. Oh, the feeling of happiness that thrilled through her soul as these thoughts presented themselves. A few short hours, and he would be with her, bringing his children with him—the older ones only, for to take the little ones from the school in which they had only recently been placed, he thought would be unwise. This meeting with his family Edith dreaded, and her heart shrunk from the cold looks she instinctively felt she would receive from them. Her pride rose rebelliously, as she pictured to herself the scene, when her beloved had told them of

his approaching marriage, and had replied to their inquiries. That he was too proud to evade their questions about her parentage, she well knew, and that close inquiries would be made upon that point, she was equally convinced. He would not mention from what a low station he had raised her, but would not this very omission suggest the worst to them? Strong, indeed, must be her love, to enable her to crush the proud swelling of her heart, as she dwelt upon these humiliating facts.

The day of her coming of age! Gradually her eyes moistened, as the picture of her departed grandmother rose before her; as she remembered her loving, constant care, and almost unconsciously she drew nearer to her the parcel that she had received from the hand of the dying woman, and which she had taken out of its resting-place only an hour ago. With falling tears she untied its covering, and with trembling lips impressed a kiss upon the letter that fell from it upon the table. "To my beloved Edith," she read, in the old-fashioned handwriting of her grandmother. Reverently she laid it by, proceeding to examine the contents of the parcel.

First, she shook out a child's short dress, of blue silk, its low-cut neck and sleeves trimmed with costly lace, whose threads were yellow as gold, with age. Wonderingly she laid it by, to take up a belt richly embroidered with silver. A pair of tiny boots of blue satin, with silver buttons on their sides, next appeared. Tenderly she lifted them, admiring the miniature silver buckles that ornamented their instep, when some hard object, concealed in their depths, fell to the ground. She picked it up, and untied its wrappings. A medallion fell into her lap. There it sparkled and shone in its bright beauty, showing to her wondering eyes the initials of "H. v. M," in diamonds, upon its golden surface. Curiously she looked at its other side, when, as if she had touched a living coal, she dropped it, with a cry of consternation; for there, plainly present to her sight, was the likeness of a dark, handsome man, set in rubies, which threw forth their fire in dazzling rays. Like one in a dream she looked around her, pressing her hand tightly to her brow, her breath suspended, and the blood tumultuously rushing to her head.

"The dress of blue silk!" she murmured to herself

while an expression of mingled fear and wonder came into her face. "Her father's likeness, set in rubies!" she continued, still bewildered. "Those initials, in diamonds, and his crest! What is this!" she exclaimed, starting to her feet, and pacing the room in great agitation. "What thoughts are these that fill my mind! I am not dreaming, and it is day—broad daylight; why does the sight of these articles make my blood course through my veins and my heart wildly leap and beat? What mad illusion of my brain! I am not well; the joy and happiness this day brings to me have intoxicated my senses! Enough of this—let me return to reality!" And drinking a glass of water hastily, she sat herself down again. "This letter will explain all, and do away with suspense." She tore open the paper.

"My beloved child," it commenced, "more than seventeen years ago there was a terrible fire in L. A violent storm broke out, and in spite of all that human help could do, the flames destroyed street after street. The city was a flood of living fire. At that time, my son, with his young wife and myself, did not live in our present abode, but a few miles

further from the city, on a farm that belonged to me ; but even at that distance we could see the smoke and the sparks that rose to the sky. Toward evening, as the bells did not cease to ring, and the leaping flames illumined the growing darkness, showing that the furious element was still pursuing its destroying course, my son determined to proceed to the scene of destruction, to give aid, if need be, or, at least, to witness, the fearful spectacle. It had grown late in the night, and we began to fear that some misfortune might have happened to him, when, to our relief, we heard his footsteps upon the gravel road. He entered the room, bearing in his arms a bundle. Silently he laid his burden upon the table, and presented to our astonished eyes a sleeping child, of about three years of age. The light disturbed it in its slumber, and it opened its eyes—large, dark, wondering eyes, which filled with tears as soon as they became conscious of its strange surroundings. It took a long time to soothe her grief—for it was a girl—and her constant calls for her mamma, until, at last, sleep again calmed her trembling lips, and shut those mournful eyes. She was clothed in the articles

you will find in the parcel, and, from their costly quality, we judged that she was the child of rich people. My son, having wandered from street to street, stumbled—for it had grown dark—over some obstacle in his path, and stooping down to examine the cause, saw the lifeless body of a woman lying on the ground. Across it lay the form of a child, sobbing violently. He lifted her up, questioning her about her name, but the child knew only her Christian name, which was Edith, and could not give any information as to her friends or home. Probably she was too young to remember that. He tried to console her, by telling her that he would find her mamma to-morrow. Soon she fell asleep, and thus he brought her home to us. A week passed, and as yet your relations—for by this time you must have understood that that child was yourself—had not been heard of. We were poor, and could not afford to spend much money, but my son went daily to L., to hear some news concerning your parentage, perusing such newspapers as he was able to get hold of, but to no avail. Two weeks passed; still nothing transpired that

could throw any light upon the matter. In the meantime, my son's only child, a little girl, about as old as yourself, died, and they resolved to adopt you as their own.

“Soon after that we sold the farm, and removed to the ‘Large Farm.’ We had given up all hope of ever discovering your parents, and the people in the neighborhood naturally believed that you were our own child. After some years had passed, my son's wife died, and he too, soon after her. You and I were left alone; and you were all to me. When you grew older, I was constantly in fear that some peasant's son might win you for his wife. I say fear, for I was convinced that your relations were people of rank; therefore I gladly accepted Mr. Raymond's offer to educate you, and welcomed his proposal to marry you, knowing him to be an honorable man. When he reads this, as I suppose he will, he will understand much that hitherto has been dark to him. The articles which you will find in the parcel may, perhaps, enable you to discover what my son had sought in vain. The initials and crest upon the medallion will show you that your ancestors are

noble. Let Mr. Raymond help you in the search for them. He will understand better than I how to advise you in this matter. And now, my child, farewell. My blessing upon you, and my best wishes for your future happiness.

Your loving grandmother, I will say, to the last.

ANN ADLAW."

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE TABLES TURNED.

The paper dropped from Edith's hands. She sat in a stupor almost bordering on unconsciousness. Her brows burned, her pulses throbbed, her hands were cold as ice. "Oh that I had the power to think!" she exclaimed, while her fingers nervously pressed her forehead. "All is confusion. A chaos of bewildering ideas chase each other, and my brain seems on fire with this unlooked-for tidings. Had I but one week to think, to take counsel with myself, I might then unravel this complicated network of facts; but what are a few hours, to see one's way clearly, in a situation like mine? A walk in the forest, perhaps, will lift the cloud this startling intelligence has thrown over my reason. The fresh morning air will restore my faculty to think; I must go at once, for no time is to be lost. In a few hours I must act, and act to a purpose."

So saying, she hastily left her room and the house, choosing a secluded path in the woods. "Ah, this is refreshing!" she exclaimed, inhaling the air with a sense of great relief. "This clears one's brain, and qualifies one to think, and to reason." A calm decision settled upon her features, and her eyes grew thoughtful. "Soon I shall be able to decide upon my future course, and to unravel the difficulties that surround my present position. I have found my mother!" And her voice trembled with tenderness as she pronounced that word. "It is not hard to love her, for my affections were won by her months ago, and I long to bring joy and happiness to her, to show her a daughter's love, and give her a child's embrace. I, also, have become a Countess!" Her eyes flashed proudly and her head rose haughtily at this thought. "How his relations will wonder, and bow, and how his son will—where am I going?" She interrupted herself quickly. "Wherefore such unbecoming, bitter thoughts?" After a long silence she recommenced her soliloquy. "Yes, yes, this will be the best way. The Countess, my mother, must know nothing of it before the ceremony is performed. *Now*

she is favorably inclined toward Mr. Raymond, thinks him noble, generous and good, and congratulates me upon my choice ; but might not her opinion suffer a change ? would she be equally rejoiced if my beloved wished to marry her daughter ? I fear that then she would remonstrate, and withhold her consent to our union ; and although, being of age, I cannot be controlled, still delay would be the probable consequence of her having a knowledge of the facts. And he—might not he, in his noble generosity, offer to release me, aye, even try to persuade me to follow my mother's wishes, hard as it would be for him to give me up ? Therefore, I will tempt none, trust none, but act without consulting any one. Now I may return. I feel easier since I have determined. It must be time for me to prepare myself to receive them." She retraced her steps to the house, and there encountered the Countess' maid, who told her that her mistress had sent her to attend on her, and ask her, when her toilet was finished, to proceed to the Countess' apartment, as her ladyship wished to put the finishing touches to her toilet.

One o'clock. The clergyman from S., the little

village close by, had arrived, and almost at the same time two carriages, containing Mr. Raymond and his family.

The party was assembled, as the Countess, leaning on the arm of her father, entered the room with Edith. There was no time for Mr. Raymond to introduce Edith to his children; he, therefore, saluted her with a loving smile and a tender pressure of his hand, leaving all else until she should be his wife.

Edith had cast a hurried look at the party; had noticed the smiles and profound bows bestowed upon the Baron and his daughter, and also seen how the expression of their features changed into measured coldness when greeting herself. This brought the color to her countenance, for well did she understand this change. Smiles and deference to the Countess; formal bows to her companion. Yet she smiled to herself, knowing that soon the same homage would be her own.

The ceremony was soon over. Mr. Raymond signed the contract, handing the pen to Edith to do the same. Her hand trembled, and it grew dark before her eyes, as she bent over the paper, but only

for a moment; then, with quick decision, she signed, "Edith, Countess von Metland."

"My darling!" exclaimed Mr. Raymond, looking, astonished, into the pale face of his young wife, "You have made a mistake." But she only smiled, and, turning to the Countess, said, with clear, ringing voice, "Mother, dear, will *you*, also, sign your name?"

General consternation was visible in every countenance, but Edith, with a "Pardon me one moment," left the room. In a few minutes she returned, bringing a parcel, which she handed to the Countess, saying, "Will you please examine its contents and read this letter?"

All had come near, now, curious to know what this interruption meant. The Countess opened the parcel. Piece after piece she drew forth, growing paler every moment, until she held up the medallion, then, with a faint cry, and the exclamation of "My husband!" sank into the arms of her father.

"My son-in-law!" cried the Baron, looking upon the portrait.

"The Count von Metland!" muttered old Freidrich, who was standing behind his master.

All was confusion now ; Edith alone remained composed, and, ordering a servant to bring water for his mistress, bathed her face and hands until life came back and her eyes opened again.

“ Do you feel better, Mother ?” she asked, caressing the cold and slender hand she held in her’s.

“ Where did you get those articles ?”

“ From my grandmother—for so I shall always call her—on her death-bed. She then told me to open the parcel on the day when I should come of age. You may imagine how I felt when I read the letter this morning, and remembered what you had told me about the loss of your child. Shall I give the letter to my grandfather to read ?”

“ Let the clergyman read it aloud.”

Breathless silence reigned while, with a distinct and clear voice, the clergyman read the short statement of Mrs. Adlaw. When he had finished, Edith put her arms tenderly around the neck of the Countess, whispering softly, “ Am I not your daughter ?”

“ My Edith, my long lost child !” was all the answer, for tears of joy almost prevented all other expression of her feelings—“ Why, then, was I told

that my child was dead? Why allowed to mourn for years over her loss?" And her eyes turned reproachfully toward her father.

"Hear me, my daughter, and condemn me not unheard. Old Freiderich came back, telling me that the body of the nurse was found, but that there was no trace of the young Countess. We went to inform you of this, but at the sight of our mournful countenances you fainted away, which ended in a long sickness. While you were lying ill I left no means untried to recover the child, but all in vain. When you had nearly recovered, we thought we had found a clue to her whereabouts, at last. The child was traced to a farm-house some miles distant from L. On arriving there, however, we were told that the former possessor of the property had left, and that the family then living there were entire strangers in the neighborhood. With this news my last hope fled, and I resolved to let you still believe that our dear Edith was dead, fearing that the uncertainty of her fate might be more dangerous to your peace of mind than the belief that she was dead. Forgive me, that I have acted thus. I did it for the best. Ever since

the coming of Miss Adlaw—Edith, I mean—I felt uncomfortable. The extraordinary likeness she bears to her father, especially the particularly haughty motion of her head and expression around the mouth, when disturbed, sometimes filled me with vague fears and hopes. Still, what could I do? I had no proofs, and it would have been cruel to raise hopes in your breast which might never have been realized. But now I shall gladly call her my grandchild, my own dear Edith.”

“There is one thing more, my daughter,” said the Countess, “which will prove, beyond a doubt, that you are my child. On the back of my Edith’s head, cunningly hid under her curls, there was one tress of silver, which always gave the nurse a great deal of annoyance. Will you let me search for it?”

“I have, indeed, this curious tress, and my grandmother often laughingly told me that it might be of use to me.” So saying, Edith let down her magnificent hair, and exposed the shining proof of her identity.

Mr. Raymond, in the meantime, had listened to all in speechless amazement, and when, at last, no doubt

was left that Edith, his 'little one,' was, indeed, of noble parentage, his heart sank within him, and fear that her relations might try to part them forever rose in his breast. It was, therefore, with a sad smile that he took her hand, as she turned to him a face radiant with love and happiness.

"How well every thing has turned out, Sir," she said, linking, fondly, her arm in his. "Is it not a happy day, indeed, my husband," she added, blushing.

"My dearest Edith!" exclaimed the Baron—while her mother, with an uneasy look, regarded her child and Mr. Raymond—"this marriage is void now. Certainly my grandchild could never mate with a merchant, no matter how good and wealthy he might be."

"Your Lordship forgets," answered Edith, hardly able to suppress her indignation, "that Mr. Raymond has claims upon my affection prior to those of my grandfather. Your Lordship must also be pleased," she added, with dignity, "to speak of my husband with becoming respect. Whoever insults him insults me."

"I highly esteem and respect Mr. Raymond, yet"—

"Enough, my Lord; I accept your apology."

And the lines around her mouth grew firm and hard.

"Mother," she said, softly, "will *you* welcome your son?"

"Edith, my daughter, must I pain you in the first hour of our reunion? Mr. Raymond will always be a most welcome guest and a highly honored friend at our house, but—"

"Edith, I—I release you!" exclaimed Mr. Raymond, with a face deadly pale, yet with his head erect and his eyes flashing with wounded pride.

"Thank you, Sir, for helping my daughter to her proper course of action."—

A cold bow was the only answer.

"Sir! Sir!" Edith cried, with a voice full of anguish—"Will you, indeed, turn your 'Sweetheart' out into the cold, cruel world again; or do you believe that I should stay here—here, with people so heartless as these? You cannot, will not, must not, leave me, Sir—*me*, who loves you so well."

"My darling, my 'little one,' I must not listen to you. I must give you up," he answered. "For

your own sake, dearest, I must sacrifice my love." Then, in deep despair, he turned from her, moving toward the door.

With one spring she was again by his side. "I shall not give *you* up, however. I am your wife. You are my husband. There stands the man who united us, and there are our signatures. Do you think that I have not thought well about the matter? Do you believe that I have been unprepared for such a scene? No, I know the world and its miserable prejudices, and I purposely kept all these facts to myself until we should be husband and wife, doubting not that my *noble relations*"—and she emphasized the words, while throwing a sweeping glance of contempt upon her grandfather and mother—"would try to separate us, should they know them beforehand; but now I am of age, and my own mistress."

"Reflect, Edith," said the Baron, in an angry voice, "before it is too late. You are *not* of age, as you think, for your birthday is in July. To-day is only the anniversary of the great fire; the sixth of May is

the day on which you were found. I can get a divorce, easily, for I have powerful friends at Court."

"Reflect!" replied Edith, calmly, nothing but her heightened color, and the trembling of her dilated nostrils showing the indignation that swelled her breast. "Did he, my husband, reflect, when he found me in my lowly hut, ignorant and without manners?" She cared not *now* that his relations should know from how low a place he had raised her. "Did *he* consider when he gave me the great treasure of his love? Did *he* draw back and think of his high position, when his heart prompted him to ask me to be his wife?" And Maurice Raymond's face flushed guiltily, as he encountered the fire of her passing glance, and his heart beat uneasily, as he remembered the rôle he had played at Freiburg. "Who is noble? He who acts as his conscience tells him is right, without listening to what the world may say, but, high above their prejudices, calmly pursues the road of goodness, honor and virtue? Or the one who, raised by the accident of birth only, looks down in idiotic superiority upon those born under less auspicious circumstances, backed by nothing that

makes mankind great and glorious? You say, also, that I am not of age, and that, therefore, my signature is null and void—be it so; get your divorce; use the great power you have at Court; give the world—your noble world, a rare tit-bit of scandal to talk about. What does this matter to *me*? My mother will lose a daughter, whom she might chain, *now*, by love, to her for ever, while I shall lose nothing, for in July the marriage ceremony shall be repeated again. Choose now, before it is too late. I shall cling to him—to my husband—for my heart, my most ardent love, has been his for years, and nothing can lessen it. He, alone, shall possess it as long as I live. Sir!” and her voice grew low and soft as she turned to Mr. Raymond, and the expression of her features became sweet and childlike, “will you leave me now? Am I not your ‘Sweetheart?’”

“Never, ‘little one,’ never; we will part no more!” he cried, clasping her, with fervent love, into his arms.

“Edith, my daughter, come, let me embrace you and your husband.”

“And you, Grandfather?”

"If your mother consents, my refusal would be useless. Yet, one request I should like to make."

"And that is?" asked Edith, smilingly.

"That your husband gives his consent to become ennobled. The estate of Einsiedel, after my death, shall go to him, and he will be Baron von Einsiedel."

"As my husband pleases. *His* name will always be the dearest to me. What do you say, Sir?"

"For your mother's sake, I consent. And now let me introduce my children to my wife."

How different her reception *now*. Smiles of gratification upon every lip, and words of endearment from every tongue.

"Edith, this is my son, Maurice."

How should she receive him? Yet, only for an instant was she undecided; then, reflecting that she could afford to be magnanimous, she gave him one long, searching look, and frankly holding out her hand, said, "I think we have met before. Is it not so?"

"If your ladyship deigns to acknowledge it, I shall feel myself highly honored."

"Nay, not so modest, my son—I am your mother now."

"This gentleman, Sir"—turning to her husband—"is the one who rescued me from danger at the Titi-Sea."

"Indeed!" was the astonished reply, while at the same time, the recollection of all that Edith had told him about that gentleman flashed vividly before his mind.

"And we shall be friends, in future."

"Thank you"—

"Mother," said Edith, completing his sentence, with a bright smile.

That evening, after Mr. Raymond's family had returned to their quarters at C., leaving their father, with his young wife, preparing for their wedding tour, William, who had particularly enjoyed the introduction scene between the ladies of his family and his new mother, whose great beauty and high-bred manners had completely won him over, said, "Well, Maud, what about overlooking our father's wife? Do you still mean to ignore her? And you, Ida, will you keep to your intention—treat the *intruder* with

cool indifference? This was quite a come down; was it not? A complete 'turning the tables.' I hope this will be a lesson to you, not to be so hasty and ready to condemn unheard."

To which well-deserved rebuke none replied, each feeling and confessing in her heart, that this time she had made a "faux pas," indeed.

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"TENDER AND TRUE," published by Mr. Moore, is from the pen of Miss Harriet B. McKeever, who has written a great many stories which have pleased and instructed adults as well as young people. Indeed, the best test of what is called "a juvenile book," is its interesting grown persons as well as children. Miss McKeever's various tales have found appreciative favor in families, and "Tender and True," her latest, is very readable, with a variety of probable incident.—*From the Press, Philadelphia, November 3d, 1877.*

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